



St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

URN: 117474

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

03–04 October 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

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

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous diocesan inspection have been addressed in full.

What the school does well

- The distinct Catholic identity is celebrated through both the school environment and the service rendered to the wider community.
- There are very strong partnerships between the school, parents, parish and diocese, the passion for Catholic life and mission is evident and shared by all.
- Staff work together collaboratively, there is a shared sense of purpose and ambition for the pupils.
- Pupils enjoy prayer and liturgy using a variety of forms of expression, their singing greatly enhances the experience for all.
- Leaders' vision and purpose is shared by all and is a driving force in ensuring pupils' faith formation.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that tasks are matched to the abilities of learners, in particular for the more able.
- Ensure more opportunities for extended writing in religious education are provided.
- Ensure pupils are provided with more opportunities to lead, plan and evaluate prayer and liturgy.

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, '*Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.*' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank. Pupils explain that St Margaret Clitherow was someone whose actions were prompted by her love of God. They explain that their actions supporting charities such as Feed Up Warm Up, the Catholic Children's Society and the Kanyike Project emulate her example. Pupils are adept at referencing the themes of Catholic social teaching during lessons and can also discuss how these themes appear throughout the whole of the taught curriculum. They enjoy learning about other faiths and explain how this knowledge helps them respect and understand people from other faiths in their community. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. They are offered leadership roles, for example, school chaplaincy, youth leadership team and eco committee. Pupils clearly enjoy these responsibilities and are highly articulate when discussing these roles. They would benefit from further opportunities to develop this work.

Staff in this school ensure that the mission statement is a living document that sets out a way of life for all to follow. Staff strive to act and respond in ways that reflect their mission. This is an extremely supportive community where staff feel valued and cherished. Staff turnover is low in this happy and welcoming environment. Parents appreciate the hardworking staff, one commented, 'The teachings of Jesus are central to this school, and this shines through in how

the children treat one another, as well as in how the teachers interact with the children.' The school respect other faiths and ensures that pupils are well equipped to understand and respect those from other faiths in the wider community. Relationships are strong and there is a commitment to helping those in need. The school employs a family support worker who focuses on parenting classes, bereavement counselling and young carers, and works with pupils who might benefit from protective behaviours work. Each classroom's environment clearly celebrates the school's Catholic character. The subject leader for Relationships, Sex, Health Education (RSHE) has carefully planned the curriculum to ensure that it meets all diocesan requirements. It is firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ.

On entering the school, the statue of St Margaret Clitherow is a focal point. Leaders have ensured that the displays and icons that hang in communal areas are testament to the school's Catholic ethos. The Mary Garden and prayer garden provide high quality outside spaces where staff and pupils congregate to pray and have some spiritual time. This is an outward looking school where leaders work closely with parents, the local parish, other Catholic schools and the diocese. One parent commented that 'the partnerships are second to none'. Parents feel valued and enjoy attending school celebrations such as play performances and international culture day. Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic social teaching. They consider both their mission and the individual in all decisions made. This is a harmonious community striving to make sure every member flourishes. Leaders have made sure that Catholic social teaching happens across the whole curriculum, so pupils understand that this doesn't happen in isolation. They celebrate the richness of Catholic contribution to culture.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

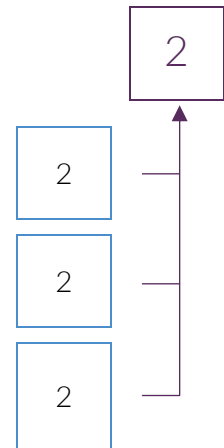
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are making good progress in religious education. They are religiously literate and are developing good skills and knowledge from their sequenced curriculum that reflects the *Religious Education Directory*. Pupils delight in asking good questions of each other and of staff. They are beginning to think ethically and theologically and enjoy the challenge of high-quality debate. In Key Stage 2 lessons, pupils considered scripture from Genesis and discussed freedom. This led to high quality responses from pupils who were able to use scripture to effectively explain their thinking. In another lesson, pupils discussed the meaning of the new commandment and its purpose. They enjoyed the challenge of discussing whether commandments are a set of rules or guides. Pupils display an eagerness to learn and know what to do to improve their work in books. They have limited extended writing opportunities to demonstrate their high-quality thinking in class. Tasks in books do not always match the needs of more able pupils. Pupil achievement in religious education is mostly in line with other core curriculum subjects.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and ensure work is interesting for pupils. In Early Years lessons, the teachers matched activities effectively to consolidate learning. Additional adults engaged in high quality discussion to facilitate partner talk. Some pupils helped care for plants in the Mary Garden and others linked their mission to their activity when delivering cards and gifts to the foodbank collection point. In Key Stage 1 lessons, the teachers focused on good questioning to provide potential for in depth discussion. Activities were well planned and matched to the learning intentions. Teachers provided opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. They were asked to consider when they acted in a way that showed faith. Teachers are adept at linking prior learning to the themes of Catholic social teaching. They plan lessons that enable pupils to engage in discussion; however, the challenging questions posed in class to develop more able learners' thinking is not always reflected in tasks in books.

Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum and are phasing in the new *Directory*. The curriculum considers progression, challenge and purpose. Leaders ensure staff have access to high quality professional development and resources. The subject leaders work collaboratively and have produced a robust action plan that contains specific targets for further improvement. The impact of this work is clearly evidenced in their responses to improvement from the last inspection. This targeted approach has resulted in teaching that is consistently good. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. Governors visit the school on a regular basis and offer support as well as challenge. They attend open evenings, make themselves visible to parents and are committed to working alongside the school leaders. Leaders provide engaging enrichment activities for pupils to enhance their learning in religious education. Pupils visit Westminster Cathedral and take part in the annual Advent Service. Recently they visited St Joseph's Church in Stevenage for the veneration of the relics of St Bernadette. Pupils also visit the Bhaktivedanta Hindu Temple as part of their other faiths work.

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

Pupils from Early Years to Year 6 engage deeply with prayer and liturgy. This is a daily pattern with which pupils are familiar and a common structure. Pupils enhance their liturgy in age-appropriate ways. The prayer spaces reflect the liturgical year in terms of colours and artifacts. Scripture is central to their liturgy and pupils use Bibles with ease. Liturgy is purposeful, enhanced by singing and has clear links to local and global events. Pupils consider their mission very carefully. Their prayer includes a variety of forms that celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition. Pupils lead a rosary club for the month of October, and they are eager to take part. They have opportunities for reflection in the prayer spaces both inside and out. Pupils enjoy Christian meditation with one pupil commenting, 'it gives me time and space to thank God for my friends and get ready for my learning in the afternoon'. Although some pupils lead prayer, most pupils have not yet fully developed their prayer and liturgy leadership roles. They have not yet had opportunity to evaluate prayer and liturgy.

The daily patten of prayer is central to life in St Margaret Clitherow. The school community unites in prayer for those in need as well as in thanksgiving. Each class has a prayer bag that contains a Bible, cloths and artifacts to celebrate the liturgical year and a prayer book to record family prayer. A parent commented, 'the school mixes everyday learning and worship together in a way that is fun and engaging for all children from all different backgrounds'. Pupils are also provided with their own prayer book to help them learn and remember prayers as they progress through the school. The parish priest celebrates Mass regularly, and pupils' responses at Mass are strong and prayerful. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also offered during Advent and Lent. Scripture is well chosen to link with the assembly and liturgy themes. Staff model exemplary practice to each other and pupils by engaging in, and leading prayer and liturgy. Staff feel invested in and

supported to help facilitate prayer and liturgy. One staff member commented when considering the support provided, 'every hour in school is a worthwhile hour'.

Leaders have developed a clear policy for prayer and liturgy. They have considered ways to develop pupil participation, and as a result pupils eagerly share their gifts and talents to enhance liturgy. Leaders and governors have ensured that close links are forged with the local parish. Their planning ensures that significant times of the liturgical year are celebrated by the school community. Leaders ensure staff avail of high-quality professional development to lead prayer and liturgy. As a result, staff are fully aware of its importance and centrality in the daily life of the school. Leaders' thoughtful provision of sacred spaces enhance the experience of prayer for pupils and staff. In a Key Stage 2 liturgy, pupils used the story of Elizabeth's pregnancy in Luke's Gospel to focus on Our Lady. The theme was about Mary saying 'yes' to God. Pupils used the outdoor resource of the Mary Garden to record Mary's attributes as they thought about her response to God. The effect on pupils of processing outdoors to this space was palpable. Leaders and governors ensure that the prayer life of the school is very well resourced. The school website reflects leaders' understanding of the centrality of prayer in the daily life of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	117474
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9193397
Full postal address of the school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Monkswood Lane, (Off Monkswood Way), Stevenage, SG2 8QJ
School phone number	01438352863
Headteacher	Carmela Puccio
Chair of governors	Sally Curtis
School Website	http://www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Evelyn Ward

Jennifer O'Prey

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