

Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Margaret Clitherow's Catholic Primary School

URN: 142319

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth on:

Date: 4 -5 October 2023

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.....

2

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.....

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The senior leadership in the school is a real strength, with the capacity to improve the school even further.
- The practical outreach of Catholic social teaching is evident and is making a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable in the community and beyond.
- The governing body is strong, supportive, but appropriately challenging.
- There is a good variety in religious education task design, ensuring that pupils are engaged in their learning and achieve well.
- Pupils lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy well; resulting in pupils keen to continue or take on ministries within the Church.

What the school needs to improve:

- Pupils need to be able to effectively articulate the ideas of Catholic social teaching and better able to give reasons for why they undertake acts of social justice.
- Pupils need to be given the opportunity to show depth in their understanding within RE, including relating learning to their own lives.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

1



Pupils are proud to be part of their school and understand what it means to be part of a distinctive Catholic community. They are keen to participate in acts of social justice, such as SMC Against Plastic Waste and their Christmas jumper swap which promoted sustainability by encouraging the school community to swap clothes instead of buying new. Although they struggle to use Catholic social teaching terminology, they are able to speak about these acts in detail and understood the importance of the changes they were trying to make. Pupils feel safe, valued and cared for, seeing themselves as valuable parts of God's creation. Pupils were impeccably behaved throughout the inspection, showing respect for others. The school's mission statement, 'We act with love, build our faith and grow as people', is deeply rooted in the school community. Staff and pupils can recite it, but more importantly, understand what it means. Pupils say that they want to grow to become the best version of themselves. Pupils now need to clearly articulate the beliefs which underpin their actions.

Staff are committed to this vision and are great role models of what it means to be a person of God. This is seen not only in the excellent pastoral care such as the community food bank, but in smaller acts of kindness with all staff playing their part to support the community and live out the values of the school. There is a strong sense of community, especially for caring for the most vulnerable. This includes a staff member explaining how they personally have needed the food bank in order to uphold the dignity of others who find themselves in a similar situation. The link between how the word of God shapes the life and mission of the school now needs to be made more explicit to pupils. Pupils benefit from the strong relationships, sex, and health education, which is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Church. The addition of literature specifically chosen to explore social justice issues helps pupils to develop a strong sense of morality and identity. For example, in the recent work on

black history education, the Windrush generation and the contributions which those of an ethnic minority make to our society.

Parents, governors and staff all noted the significant improvements which have been made over the last 5 terms, talking of a community being given the chance to flourish. This is as a direct result of the passion and drive of the leaders, including governors. There has been a re-emergence of links with the parish. The parish priest is extremely supportive, and the pupils are excited to see him on his regular visits to the school. He feels that the school has 'opened up as a place of evangelisation'. Governors are fastidious in exercising their duty as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. They have a very good understanding of the school's journey and are regular and robust with their monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. It is clear that this is of paramount importance to them. They question, challenge, and push forward, ensuring that they place the Catholic life and mission of the school at the heart of everything they do. They recognise how far the school has come in such a short period of time, acknowledging this as a great testament to the managerial and strategic leadership of the school, stating, 'It is a Catholic community which happens to be a school'. The school's self-evaluation is strong, but to progress further, the voice of other key partners needs to be sought in order to further enhance the life and mission of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

Through carefully planned lessons, pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skill. The quality of work is good, showing a growing knowledge of the faith. However, very few pieces demonstrate a greater depth of understanding. Therefore, moving forward, the school needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to show depth in their understanding, particularly in relating their learning to their own lives. The quality of work and the care which is given to religious education demonstrates the high regard given to the subject. During lessons, and in conversation with the inspectors, pupils were able to recall some of the key facts that they had been taught during recent religious education topics and many demonstrated a firm understanding of these. Overall attainment in religious education is at least average and in line with other core curriculum subjects. Pupils use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, linking what they have learned with how they should then behave. They are also aware of how they should encourage others to act. One parent said that their son is 'happy with his religious education and tries to apply his learning to his everyday life.' The vast majority of pupils say that they enjoy RE, with one saying that they enjoy growing in their learning about God. Behaviour in religious education lessons is good and the pupils are usually engaged.

Teachers are very committed to the value of religious education which is evident in their expectations of pupils, and as a consequence, the presentation of religious education work is of a very high standard. Teachers recognise the impact that religious education has on pupils' moral and ethical development and this is evident in their work on Catholic social teaching. There is variety in provision with pupils given the opportunity to present their learning in a variety of ways. This helps to meet the differing needs of pupils. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and can teach religious education effectively. Where the strongest practice is seen, adults use

questioning skillfully to move learning on and pupils' verbal responses are used to assess their learning and then provide additional clarification or support. Effective practice such as this needs to be shared so that there is greater consistency in the standard of teaching across the school.

The school is on a clear trajectory of improvement. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates rigorous monitoring, analysis and reflection resulting in appropriate plans for improvement. Through the monitoring of religious education, leaders have a good understanding of the provision across the school. They have a clear plan for improvement which they have already begun to implement. One of the main strategies for this is through the re-introduction of professional development staff meetings to unpick the theology of the unit prior to planning. Professional development in religious education is valued and prioritised and staff are given the opportunity to enhance their knowledge. The RE Leader is proactive in her support of staff development and staff are also confident to ask for help when they are unfamiliar with the content. As a result of these things, teachers feel confident to plan and deliver lessons. This professional development will need to continue for all practitioners in relation to both subject knowledge and pedagogical development so that teaching is consistently good or outstanding. Staff felt that the recent staff training on Catholic social teaching was particularly beneficial. Thought has been put in to supporting staff, even down to the unit overview calendar being linked to the liturgical colours. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given prominence within the school and provision matches that of other core subjects.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

Prayer is central to the daily life of the school community. Pupils lead prayer and liturgy for the school on a weekly basis, utilising their gifts to enhance the prayer life of the school. Parents are invited in for this which helps foster their spiritual life. It was clear that these prayerful celebrations are important to both pupils and parents, with one parent saying how they had been up early getting ready for the worship as it was important to them and their child. Another parent commented, 'My child is keen to pray for her friends who are in distress, during our prayer time at home.' Pupils conduct, behaviour and attitudes during prayer and liturgy are excellent. Pupils act reverently during times of worship, joining in prayers and singing, as well as when gathering and going forth from times of prayer. Pupils work well with others, especially the lead teacher for liturgical prayer, to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy. Pupils, in particular the liturgy leaders, understand how to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy. They work well to create prayerful celebrations for the school community and time is given for them to evaluate these. Pupils now need to develop their ability to reflect on what they may do differently next time in light of this.

A variety of different prayer and liturgy opportunities are planned and celebrated, such as school Masses, Marian processions as well as Masses for the parish being held at the school. A staff member stated, 'I am truly blessed to teach children who are so eager to know more of the word of God and spirituality at different levels.' The prayer life of the school, and roles such as the liturgy leaders, gives pupils a good start into ministry in the Church. The school environment reflects the Catholic nature of the school and provides opportunities for prayer and reflection, including Stations of the Cross which have been rescued and then restored after the demolition of the local church. The prayer garden provides opportunities for the pupils to be with God away from the environment. One pupil seen sitting there by a member of staff said, 'I'm just talking to Him'.

Leaders understand the needs of the school and the importance for everyone to be able to participate in liturgy. They have a clear strategy for building up these skills as pupils progress through school. The lead teacher for liturgical prayer is passionate about worship and this is instilled in pupils. It was stated that one pupil cried when they had to relinquish their role as it meant so much to them. She is skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. Senior leaders act as strong role models for staff, sharing their expertise with teachers new to the role, which ensures consistency in expectations. Resources are provided which support staff and pupils in planning acts of worship. Leaders, including governors, regularly review the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy to ensure a good standard is maintained, and the voice of pupils and other relevant stakeholders now needs to be included into the evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142319
Full postal address of the school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Pembroke, Hanworth, Bracknell, RG12 7RD
School phone number	01344 424030
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Anne Mulholland
Chair of governing board	Mr Rory McCormack
School Website	https://www.stmargaretcclitherowbracknell.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Frassati Catholic Academy Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4 - 11
Trustees	Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	07/03/2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mr Jeff Sendall

Lead inspector

Mrs Nuala Oster

Team inspector

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