

# DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH VALIDATION REPORT



## St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Pembroke, Hanworth, Bracknell RG12 7RD

URN: 110033  
Date of previous validation: 1 April 2011  
**Date of this validation: 29 February and 7 March 2016**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous validation:	Good
	<b>This validation:</b>	<b>Good</b>

The school community:	Outstanding	Attainment and progress in RE:	Good
The wider community:	Good	Quality of teaching in RE:	Good
Spiritual development:	Good	Leadership and management of RE:	Good
Moral development:	Good	Leadership and management:	Good

### This is a good school

- All in the school work hard to 'Let all that you do be done in love'. This is evident in the daily interaction between all members of this inclusive, supportive and welcoming community.
- The school benefits from strong links with the local cluster of Catholic schools.
- Staff and children act as witnesses to their faith, through their support of one another and their support for local, national and international charities.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) are improving. Evidence from books, particularly in recent months and the lessons observed, show that children are making secure progress and reaching good standards. Pupils enjoy the subject and appreciate how it can help them in their daily lives.
- The school provides a range of good quality worship, which allows individual and collective members of the school community to express their relationship with God and with one another in a reflective and prayerful manner.
- The links with the local parish are good.
- Parents' views of the school are supportive. A very large majority of those responding to the pre-validation survey were positive about all aspects of school life.
- The school leadership, including governors, is committed in its drive to further develop the Catholic life of the school.
- The school effectively supports pupils' moral development. Strategies and approaches, which give pupils opportunities to take on responsibilities along with celebrations of achievements, positively promote pupils' self-esteem and Christian attitudes.
- Pupils are justly proud of their school; they said the school 'is somewhere that everyone is nice, where we forgive each other, and learn from our mistakes'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

In order to continue to move forward, the school should consider the following:

- In key stage one, ensure the school complies with the requirement from the Bishops' Conference on the percentage of time spent on teaching RE.
- Review the vision and mission statements, along with the other guidance currently offered, to provide a clearer and more cohesive framework to inspire and direct the school community.
- In order to consolidate and embed recent progress in RE, the school should ensure that:
  - Tasks are more closely matched to national expectations, especially for upper key stage two.
  - Activities are designed to deepen children's knowledge and understanding of RE.

## Full Report

### The school as a Catholic community

The school community:

The wider community:

**Outstanding**

**Good**

- All in the school work hard to 'Let all that you do be done in love'. Throughout the school there is firm evidence that you are within a community of faith. Strong examples include:
  - The warmth of the welcome received by visitors.
  - The living out of the Gospel values in a spirit of discipleship which can be seen in the daily interactions within this inclusive, supportive and welcoming community.
  - The many physical signs celebrating the school's Catholic ethos, including prayer areas and worship boards in all classrooms and a celebration of the school's patron saint.
- The leadership uses a number of statements to share its vision for the school, including vision and mission statements and a quote from Corinthians. It would be beneficial to review all these key statements and how they support and relate to each other, to provide a single more cohesive, Christ centred vision that can be used with all the school community.
- Parish links, including the support offered by the parish priest, are good. Children from the school regularly join parishioners on a Friday for the parish Mass and 'soup and a roll'. Good support is offered by the school for the parish First Holy Communion programme.
- The school has developed strong and mutually beneficial links with the local Catholic cluster of schools. Good links also exist with other schools and local community organisations.
- Parents' views of the school are supportive. A very large majority of those responding to the pre-validation survey were positive about all aspects of school life. The school communicates well with parents, making good use of new technology, ensuring they are kept up to date and informed. However, the school recognises that it needs to seek additional ways to encourage parents to become more involved in the life of the school, for example, attendance at liturgies.

### Curriculum religious education

Attainment and progress:

Quality of teaching:

Leadership and management of RE:

**Good**

**Good**

**Good**

- In key stage one, the school currently does not comply with the expectation of the Bishops' Conference that 10% of teaching time is devoted to religious education. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible.
- The evidence in the pupils' books, the good quality teaching seen on the day and discussions with pupils all combine to show that attainment and progress in RE are secure and improving.
- Pupils in the school value RE and recognise that it can help them in their daily lives. In the lessons observed pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to learning and behaviour was good. Learning is supported by well-presented and organised environments, well-chosen resources and targeted support from learning support assistants.
- Although the validators agree that there has been recent progress in raising standards in RE the school must ensure this is built upon so that good practice is embedded and children's knowledge and understanding in the subject is extended and deepened further.
- There are examples of children's work for every RE topic. However, tasks should be more closely matched to national expectations in RE. Care also needs to be taken that modelling of tasks by the teacher does not inhibit independent learning. Recent improvements in marking shows this is increasingly RE-centred and designed to move learning forward.

- In collaboration with the local Catholic cluster, the school is developing its assessment in RE to reflect the process in other subjects, i.e. focussing on assessing pupils' deeper understanding. The diocese, and Catholic schools nationally, are still working with the agreed national levels of attainment in RE; consequently, the school will need to ensure it can report outcomes in terms of levels, particularly at the end of key stages one and two.
- The newly-appointed RE co-ordinator has developed a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject as a result of monitoring standards in RE, through observing teaching, pupil conferencing, work sampling and moderating levels of attainment, along with the headteacher. Additional, valued, support is provided by the RE-focussed governors.

## **Spiritual and moral development**

Spiritual development:

**Good**

Moral development:

**Good**

- The school provides a range of good quality worship, which allows individual and collective members of the school community to express their relationship with God and with one another in a reflective and prayerful manner. The school embraces opportunities to nurture spirituality and give Christian witness. These include:
  - Liturgies to mark special times or occasions, for example, Harvest, Easter, May procession, St Margaret Clitherow and a Leavers' Mass.
  - Within worship encouraging the children to reflect on Scripture and how it can impact on how they live their lives.
  - The use of Lent and nativity prayer boxes in the early years.
  - The use of the school grounds to support and enhance worship.
- A start has been made on providing opportunities for the children to take a greater lead in planning or taking a more active role within their class acts of worship; a good example of this was seen during the validation. This practice is currently limited to the older classes; thought should be given to how this can be extended to the younger classes.
- The children in the school demonstrate good behaviour and Christian attitudes in their relationships, with a clear sense of right and wrong. Key factors promoting this include:
  - The use of worship to encourage children to reflect on their actions.
  - The good Christian role models provided by the staff and older children in the school.
  - The commitment to supporting the most vulnerable.
- The celebration of achievement positively promotes pupil self-esteem and confidence. The children are rewarded for good behaviour and successes are celebrated in a variety of ways. Once the mission statement has been revised, thought should be given to linking some of the awards or rewards more explicitly to the school's Catholic ethos.
- Groups of pupils take on key responsibilities throughout the school, including sitting on the school council, working in the garden area, acting as prayer partners and play buddies.

**Leadership and management:**

**Good**

- School leaders provide a good model of Christian leadership, where all members of the school are valued. The leadership is fully committed in its drive to bring about improvements.
- The governing body is a strong supporter of the school, however, more thought needs to be given as to how governors can better monitor the quality of RE and the Catholic life of the school and provide the challenge necessary to ensure these key aspects flourish and excel.
- The whole governing body would benefit from becoming more involved in the diocesan self-review process and the outcomes. Progress has been made on the issues identified for improvement in the last validation, particularly in developing ways to engage pupils in more profound reflection of the Scriptures and in improving links with the local parish.

## School details

<b>Name of school:</b>	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 - 11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	207
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Stephen Clay
<b>Headteacher:</b>	David Masters

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic School is an average size primary school situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Bracknell. It is in the Bracknell Parish in the South Berkshire Pastoral Area and is an academy in the Catholic Academy Trust in East Berkshire. The school benefits from extensive, landscaped grounds with excellent play facilities.

The school serves families from a wide socio-economic background, with the large majority of pupils being White, though there is an increasing number from a wide range of ethnic groups, including those for whom English is an additional language (28%). The percentage of children on the special needs and disability register is just below the national average. The number receiving free school meals is much lower than the average.

## Information about this validation

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

### Validation Team

Robert Dare	Lead validator
Ursula Clark	Assistant validator

### Activities carried out as part of the validation

- Ethos walk.
- Discussion on the school's self-evaluation sheets.
- Discussions with various members of the school community.
- Observations of class worship.
- Observations of teaching and learning in RE, including joint observations with the school leader and RE co-ordinator.
- Pupil work scrutiny.
- Feedback of key findings to the headteacher and RE co-ordinator and representatives of the governing body.

## Conclusion

The validators would like to thank the headteacher, RE co-ordinator, staff, governors, the parish priest, parents and pupils of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School for their preparatory work for the validation, which forms part of the school's regular self-review cycle. They would also like to express their appreciation for the warmth of welcome they received and the support given during the validation process.