



St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School

URN: 104481

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

07–08 December 2023

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

1

What the school does well

- St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School is firmly founded on the teachings of the Catholic faith with all members belonging to one extraordinary Christ centred family.
- Pupils are exemplary in their behaviour, attitudes, learning and care of each other.
- The head teacher is an inspirational Catholic leader who humbly leads her school to know and love Jesus; ably supported by the leaders for religious education.
- The staff community share the vocation of using their own personal gifts for the good of St Margaret Mary's.
- Over time pupils make exceptional progress spiritually, emotionally and academically.

What the school needs to improve

- Involve pupils in the self-evaluation of Catholic life, 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

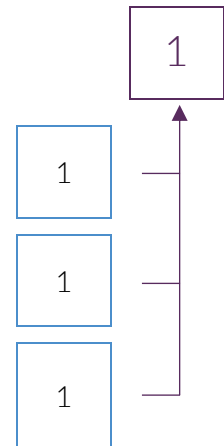
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Margaret Mary's is a happy school where the children and pupils are confident and secure. They know they are unique and created in the image and likeness of God. The school mission statement "Loving, Learning and Growing Together with Jesus" is lived by all. All pupils can articulate what this means: that they do their best for Jesus. They understand in an age-appropriate way Catholic social teaching, for example children, have adopted an animal from the World Wildlife Fund. The new eco councillors are enthusiastic, applying knowledge from external visits and books read in school to raise awareness of our responsibility to care for the God's world. They are active participants in working towards the "Live Simply" award and have focused their Advent giving on raising money for world gifts. They also fundraise at a local level supporting charities such as Mary's Meals, the local food bank, Clare House children's hospice and the Jamie Leigh Foundation. The Community Spirit festival and Jamie Leigh Foundation are especially important to all members of the school community as they remember with love two deceased pupils. Through this remembrance pupils have an understanding of loss and sorrow but also of thanksgiving for their lives. The pupils willingly take on leadership roles throughout the school. All pupils show respect for one another and other faiths.

The mission and gospel values were reviewed by staff, pupils and governors. As a result there is whole school ownership of the mission. The school gospel values of kindness, forgiveness, love and respect are interwoven into the school rules and so impact on the way all interact. At St Margaret Mary's there are no outsiders, all are welcome. Staff are exemplary role models for the children and parents. The school's partnership with parents is exceptional; they work beside families. The strong school team provides support for families, emotionally,

practically and educationally. Parents have access in school to many programmes to support their children's and their own wellbeing such as power of positive parenting, play therapy, and sunbeams. There are also strong links with external organisations. This is a school that always goes the extra mile for its families and staff, which is reflected in the Well Being Award. The physical environment internally and externally consistently celebrates the ethos and witness of the school. Chaplaincy is central to the life of this school and enables all to grow spiritually and morally. The school has adopted the 'Journey in Love' scheme for which meets statutory and diocesan requirements for relationship sex and health education.

Leaders and governors are united in their holistic approach in ensuring that the Catholic life and mission is central to the daily life of the school. The leadership team pursues this commitment with joy, enthusiasm and dedication and are inspirational leaders. Governors are active parishioners which strengthen the partnership between school, home and parish. One governor commented, "Make church happy and they will come to Church." There is a strong working partnership with the archdiocese; staff attending various courses and pupils taking part in the archdiocesan Singing programme. Teaching staff are proud to have studied for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The archdiocese benefits from staff knowledge and experience. The deputy head is a member of the primary core cluster and has contributed exemplary planning materials focused on the Religious Education Directory, for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The partnership with St Margaret Mary's junior school is highly valued. Both schools share the same mission statement and values, which ensure that transition from the infant to junior school is smooth and effective. Leader's self-evaluation is accurate and effective and is continually being revisited; pupils now need to be involved in this evaluation. The whole school curriculum reflects a Catholic world view.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

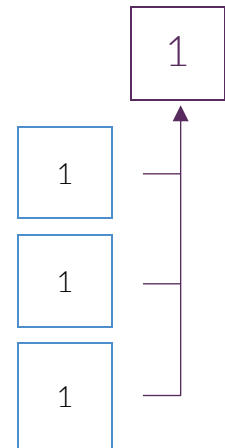
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 appropriate to their age are developing excellent knowledge. This progress is seen in their portfolios and exercise books and through pupil discussion. Book scrutiny show that religious education work reflects the standards in English books. Children from the earliest years are able to talk about their learning with enthusiasm. They were able to retell the Christmas story and explain how key characters would have felt using vocabulary such as 'shocked' when the angels appeared to the shepherds, whilst 'joyful' when they visited Jesus. All pupils including those with additional needs make excellent progress from their starting points; this is because teachers take the approach that all children are able. The school is successfully moving away from the Come and See programme to the new Religious Education Directory. This is enabling a greater scripture focusing for younger children. Pupils are religiously literate. They can explain confidently their previous and new learning, for example the meaning of baptism and Advent. In a Christingle lesson a pupil explained that 'the red ribbon was the colour of Jesus' heart; his love wrapped round the world.' Pupils enjoy their religious lessons and are active participants in their learning through using talking partners, role play, and stem sentences. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Behaviour is exemplary in all classes.

Teachers are confident and have strong subject knowledge as all teachers have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. This shows the deep commitment, and the high expectations leaders have for religious education. All year groups benefit from planning together to ensure consistency in teaching, provision, display, and support for learning. As a result, all teaching is good with some outstanding teaching observed. The deployment of skilled teaching assistants are a key part in pupils achieving age related expectations in religious education. Through their support and positive role modelling, all pupils are actively involved in their learning and make good progress. Planning is good and is adapted to the needs of the pupils as well as linked to

their previous learning. The school measures progress systemically and moderates each term to ensure accuracy and consistency. There is good use of praise to encourage pupils to do their best; this includes verbal praise as well as giving certificates linked to their mission statement. Children are very proud of their certificates. Pupils are given time in lessons to reflect on their learning and how it impacts on their everyday lives.

Leaders and governors successfully fulfil all the requirements of the Religious Education Directory. Leaders have fully engaged with the demands of its content; the early years classes having embedded its framework this term. Year 1 classes will begin to use it from January. By September 2024, the content will be in use throughout the school. Religious education has full parity with other core subjects. The school commitment to high quality professional development is seen in their engagement with the archdiocese. The leader of religious education is exceptional, a positive role model and well respected by all staff. She ensures that all staff are up to date with their subject knowledge and pedagogical developments. She willingly shares her expertise with the primary core cluster and the Knowsley cluster. The curriculum is planned and monitored to ensure that all pupils make progress. Pupils learning is enriched by inspirational guests and by visits to places of interest. The children attend church regularly and the school is very fortunate to have frequent visits to classes by the parish priest. The self-evaluation of religious education by governors and leaders is robust and continuous. It is informed by regular monitoring and self-challenge.

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

All pupils, including the youngest, are reverent and engage happily in prayer with confidence. Pupils sing enthusiastically and joyfully and are proud to be part of the archdiocesan singing programme. The youngest children have the confidence to sing solo in church to over a hundred parents. All classrooms have an age appropriate designated prayer space. These are focal points for the pupils. Pupils supported by staff also organise focal points for whole school worship creating a prayerful space for reflection. As pupils progress through school they are age appropriately given more responsibility to plan and deliver prayer. However pupils now need to be given the opportunity to evaluate their class and whole school worship. Pupils can explain how prayer impacts on their daily lives; 'I forgive because Jesus wants us to do that.' Pupils share their prayer experiences with their families. This ranges from taking home the Posada or small prayer tokens, to parents attending liturgy in the classroom. Pupils know the liturgical cycle and that the Church uses colours to show the different times of the year. They know there are times of the year when specific prayers and services are appropriate, for example, the Stations of the Cross, during Lent, and the washing of feet in Holy Week.

Pupils experience prayer throughout the day. It is an integral part of the daily routine of school life. Parents comment that their children talk positively about prayer. Prayer and worship is inspiring and as a result the children know who Jesus is and that he is part of their lives. During observed class prayer and worship pupils experienced a wide variety of prayer including reflective silence which even the youngest children were fully immersed in. Pupils like to share this knowledge with their parents. Parents feel fully involved with the Catholic life of the school and particularly enjoy attending prayer and worship sessions in class. The partnership between the parish and the school is vibrant and strong. As the church is next to the school pupils frequently visit for liturgies and Masses. Throughout Advent, weekly liturgies to which parents are invited are held in church. The pupils are excited to go to Mass as it is a happy place for them. The parish priest is a very popular visitor to school, attending the Friday celebration

assembly and giving out the mission certificates. The memorial garden is now dedicated to two past pupils and is used by the classes for prayer and worship.

Prayer and liturgy are a strength of the school. All staff have ownership of the prayer and liturgy policy. This means that staff are excellent role models and ensure high quality participation by pupils. Staff live out their faith, and their immediate reaction to tragedy is to gather and pray. Leaders ensure that worship is always inclusive; that the four part model of worship is followed and that scripture is always age appropriate. Staff are increasing pupils' knowledge of responses in Mass by including them in prayer and liturgy. Leaders, governors and the parish priest plan the school calendar to ensure the fullness of the liturgical year is celebrated. Holy Week is an especially poignant time during which pupils live out the events of Christ's passion, in the church and the school. Leaders and governors place the highest priority on professional development and as a result staff have a deep understanding of Catholic tradition and a variety of ways of praying. Leaders use observations to regularly evaluate the impact of prayer and liturgy. Pupils, in an age- appropriate way, now need to be more involved in this. Leaders ensure that prayer is a joyful experience. Parents commented that they could not ask for a better school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	104481
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3403358
Full postal address of the school	St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School, Pilch Lane, Liverpool, L14 0JG
School phone number	0151 477 8815
Headteacher	Louise Byrne
Chair of Governors	Clare Ferguson
School Website	www.stmargaretmarysinfant.com/
Trusteeship	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not Applicable
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Fiona Brownsey	Lead
Angela Phillips	Lead

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