

St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School

URN: 142263

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Northampton

16–17 January 2025

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

- Respect for personal dignity and the dignity of others is at the heart of the school's ethos. The school has extremely strong partnerships with parents who are wholly supportive of the school leadership.
- Staff provide outstanding pastoral care with a clear and unwavering commitment to supporting the most vulnerable.
- Behaviour of pupils in class and throughout the school is exemplary.
- Pupils approach prayer and liturgy with a genuine sense of reverence and respect, showing a deep understanding of the sacredness of these moments.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school environment more distinctly reflects and celebrates its Catholic ethos making it a more visible and integral part of the daily experience.
- Ensure that activities in lessons are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that pupil led prayer and liturgy is further developed and adapted as pupils progress through the school.

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

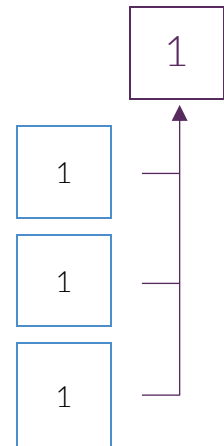
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 have a strong understanding of the school's distinctive Catholic identity, charism and mission. They recite their mission statement, 'Learning with Jesus in faith, hope and love', and explain that they do their best to live out this mission daily. They clearly recognise that the school community is committed to embodying the teachings of St Margaret. Pupils recognise that she demonstrated the importance of supporting those in need. It is evident that respect for personal dignity, both their own and that of others, is central to the school's ethos. Pupils in Year 1 explained that pupils of different faiths value reflection time. They demonstrate a sense of understanding about God's love for all. Pupils eagerly take on leadership roles and actively participate in the spiritual and pastoral opportunities made available to them. The 'Mini Vinnies' group plays a vital role in meeting community needs. Pupils express pride in their fundraising initiatives. They enjoy fundraising for Noah, The St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Cafod, demonstrating a clear comprehension of the theological principles behind these actions. The vibrancy of Catholic life and mission is reflected in the relationships and initiatives within the school. However, the environment does not explicitly celebrate and reflect the school's strong Catholic ethos.

Staff have a genuine enthusiasm for their work and a strong sense of support for one another. This collaborative spirit is complemented by a culture with Christ at the centre, evidenced by the warm relationships and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. A staff member surveyed commented, 'As a member of staff I feel cared for and valued as part of this team.' The commitment to the most vulnerable is strong. This is illustrated by initiatives such as driving to the food bank for families in need, and targeted workshops for vulnerable pupils. This is a community that cares deeply for its members. The school values and celebrates the diverse cultures and belief systems that make up their community. They take the time to understand their pupils and families, often finding innovative ways to involve parents and enhance community engagement. The school's outstanding pastoral care reflects a strong and explicit

commitment to supporting the most vulnerable members of the community. The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision is thoughtfully planned to align with diocesan requirements and is rooted in Church teaching.

Leaders articulate the Church's mission in education with clarity and serve as devoted guardians of this mission. They recognise the pivotal role parents play as the primary educators of their children. Parents value this and contribute enthusiastically. One parent commented, 'school leaders are devoted and considerate of all the children'. The leadership team exemplifies powerful witness to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching, demonstrating a sincere commitment to serving the most vulnerable both materially and educationally. Leaders have ensured the budget is ringfenced to support family workers whose impact in school is far-reaching. Respect for staff well-being ensures that decisions prioritise their welfare. Governors are deeply committed to the Catholic life and mission, consistently leading by example and reinforcing its importance as a focus for ongoing school improvement. Professional development relating to Catholic life and mission is frequent, engaging and impactful, ensuring that staff possess a deep understanding of the school's mission and an eagerness to support and shape it. Leaders are particularly attentive in supporting new staff, offering thoughtful and focused induction programmes to help them integrate smoothly into the school community. St Margaret of Scotland is a place where community, faith and education flourish together.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

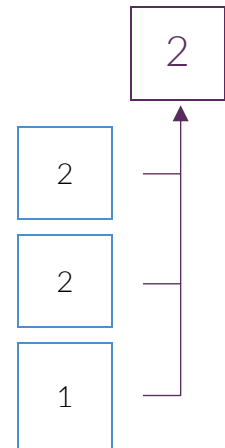
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 building a solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, and skills in line with the *Religious Education Directory*. All pupils including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are making consistent progress in learning, remembering, and applying new concepts throughout the curriculum. Pupils are religiously literate and can use subject-specific vocabulary effectively. They apply their knowledge and skills to reflect spiritually, think ethically, and explore theological ideas. Work produced is well-presented and displays emerging creativity and individuality. Pupils' enthusiasm for religious education is evident, fostering good behaviour and high levels of engagement throughout the lessons. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils were learning about how Christians live; they demonstrated that they had remembered previous lessons very well recalling how Mary said 'yes' to God. Learning was calm and purposeful as pupils considered how they also say 'yes' to God. Attainment in religious education aligns with other core curriculum subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and display a genuine commitment to the value of religious education. Their enthusiasm and clarity of purpose inspire pupils in meaningful ways. Through skilled questioning, teachers assess pupils' understanding and adjust their explanations to enhance learning outcomes. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, looking at key moments in scripture, the teacher's incisive questioning elicited deeper responses from pupils. They, in turn, engaged thoughtfully with her enthusiasm and knowledge. In Early Years, staff ensured that activities were creatively designed to consolidate learning about the 'Three Wise Men'. Staff celebrate effort and progress thereby motivating pupils. They are adept at recognising the impact of religious education on pupils' moral and spiritual growth. There are opportunities for reflection within lessons. Teachers consistently use effective methods to capture prior learning, enabling pupils to make meaningful connections. However, activities are not always adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The effective use of support staff helps pupils to achieve, contributing to a positive learning environment.

Leaders and governors ensure the school's religious education curriculum is a faithful representation of the *Directory*. Religious education enjoys parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing and staffing. Leaders and governors are committed to high-quality professional development. They have ensured that the subject leader is well resourced to deliver support and training. Teachers highly value this input from the subject leader who embodies an inspiring vision for teaching and learning, leveraging expertise to drive continuous improvement. This leadership extends beyond the school, facilitating the subject's development within the trust. This further enhances the subject's profile. Religious education is structured to reinforce and expand prior learning. Partnerships with external organisations and the wider community enrich pupils' learning experiences, promoting engagement and broadening horizons. Leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to rigorous self-evaluation. Strategic action planning, informed by in-depth analysis, drives continuous improvement, resulting in consistently strong outcomes.

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

The school provides meaningful experiences of prayer and liturgy that deeply engage pupils, fostering full, active, and conscious participation. Pupils illustrate this engagement through their ability to maintain prayerful silence, their attentiveness during prayer and liturgy, and their enthusiastic involvement in communal singing. Pupils demonstrate a detailed and age-appropriate understanding of the diverse forms of prayer within the Catholic tradition. They enjoy Monday meditation with their parents. They know traditional prayers, write their own prayers, use scripture and demonstrate a deep reverence during reflection. Staff commented 'The children know how powerful prayer is and ask if they can pray for their peers'. They show an excellent grasp of the structure and significance of the Church's liturgical year and how it is woven into the school's prayer life. There is collaborative preparation for prayer and liturgy with pupils working effectively alongside teachers. Pupils can articulate with confidence how prayer and liturgy impact on their lives. They reflect on their experiences of prayer with clarity, often citing specific ways in which these moments have inspired meaningful action in their lives.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's life, deeply embedded in daily routines and key moments of joy and sorrow. Thoughtfully selected scripture, aligned with the liturgical seasons, is used as the foundation for prayer. Staff lead by example, inspiring pupils to pray. A staff member commented, 'I really enjoy attending Monday prayer group sessions to begin my working week with reflection and prayer.' The school works closely with families, sending home prayer bags to strengthen pupils' faith and connection to the wider Church. This holistic approach ensures prayer and liturgy remain vibrant and transformative for the whole community. Pupils are in the process of developing their skills in planning, leading, and evaluating prayer and liturgy. As a result, pupils are not always effectively prepared for, and able to evaluate, well-structured experiences of prayer and liturgy.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is clearly written, making it an accessible and practical tool for staff. Leaders, including governors, demonstrate a deep understanding of the varying levels and skills of participation appropriate to pupils' age and capacity, ensuring that as pupils

mature, they can engage in prayer with increasing confidence and ease. Leaders, including governors, have carefully structured the school calendar and timetable to provide regular opportunities for the community to celebrate the Eucharist. Pupils honour Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament during Eucharistic Adoration in the school. They pray the stations of the cross during Lent. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered during Lent and Advent. Leaders, including governors, prioritise high-quality, professional development for all staff. This training occurs weekly, enabling all staff to understand the central role of prayer and liturgy in the school's ethos and equipping relevant staff to lead with skill and confidence. Leaders, including governors, ensure prayer and liturgy are given priority in resource allocation, including budgeting, staffing, and facilities.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 142263 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 8213355 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School, Rotheram Avenue, Luton, LU1 5PP |
| School phone number | 001582723430 |
| Headteacher | Steve Chiswell |
| Chair of local governing body | Jennifer Dowsett |
| School Website | https://www.stmargarets.luton.sch.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Academy |
| Admissions policy | Non-selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 2-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | June 2018 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | 2 |

The inspection team

Evelyn Ward
Jo Marsh

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 |