

## INSPECTION REPORT St Margaret Mary RC Primary School Manchester

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Inspection date 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015

Reporting Inspector Mrs Donna Kiernan  
Mr Brendan Hennesey  
Mrs Pamela Macro

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105533
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	353
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Angela Ager
Head teacher	Mrs Margaret Cunningham
Date of previous inspection	

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The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3 = Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St. Margaret Mary's is a larger than average Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school with a one and a half form entry intake serving St. Margaret Mary's parish and local area. 22% of pupils are supported by the pupil premium grant and the proportion of pupils on the SEN register is below the national average with 3 children have Statements. The school welcomes pupils from a varied socio-economic area which extends beyond the parish boundaries. On entry assessments indicate that attainment is below national expectations. The majority of the children are of white British heritage with 23% being from other ethnic backgrounds. 84% of the pupils are baptised Catholic. There are 8% of children for whom English is not their first language. 90% of adults working in the school are Roman Catholic with the remaining 10% being Christian. The school holds The Manchester Healthy Schools award and also the Artsmark Award. It is an active member of the Manchester University Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) initiative, which is designed to promote pupils' personal development and self-esteem. The school also runs a breakfast club, which provides before-school support activities for pupils who sometimes find the work difficult.

The Executive Headteacher's role is shared with a nearby Catholic Primary school under a Diocesan Agreement and the former Deputy Headteacher was appointed as Head of School in September 2013.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

The Governing body and staff of St Margaret Mary have dedicated themselves to building a Catholic learning community which really does have Christ at the centre and expects only the very best for all of the members within the community. The Catholic life of the school is evident and permeates all areas of life with vision and values being constantly reinforced. The Mission statement is contemporary, known and lived by all, and the Catholic education that they receive enables them to understand their role as stewards who have a valuable contribution to make to the common good for all. Leadership at all levels demonstrates a clear vision and sense of purpose for wanting all to be the very best that they can be. The Governors, Executive Head, Headteacher and Leadership Team lead the school with a vision and sense of purpose that recognises the dignity and value of every member of the community. Gospel values permeate all areas of the curriculum with the Learning Council stating that the school's golden rule is to, 'Treat others as you wish to be treated and 99.9% of children do this' and, stating that, 'God shines through all of us, and our actions show this'. Those parents who were interviewed spoke of their real appreciation of the current leadership team as a driving force in developing a real Catholic Learning community where every individual was valued as a child of God, where problems were dealt with immediately and where parental needs were catered for on every level.

## **KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- The welcome offered to all and the respect, dignity and care shown to every individual within the community, especially those most vulnerable
- The witness and confidence of pupils in expressing their beliefs and their exceptional enthusiasm and behaviour – real ambassadors of this Christ-centred school
- Relationships at all levels are the core of this outstanding Catholic learning community
- The inspirational leadership at all levels which is clearly evidenced and based on Gospel values

### **THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

The mission of the school is clearly lived as part of the Church's mission in education. It is well known by all and is related to all of the school's work at all levels. The Senior Leadership Team and RE Leader have ensured that the religious life of the school is a priority. Governors monitor and evaluate the progress of the school and ensure that policies and procedures reflect the Catholic vision and mission of the school. Monitoring and tracking of progress demonstrate that children make very good progress in RE and that it is given parity with other core subjects. The Chair of Governors was keen to highlight the work of the school in developing Catholic leaders at all levels and the recent and regular reviews of the Catholic life of the school which is prioritised at governors meetings. The RE governor completes regular monitoring visits and learning walks in order to support and challenge the school. Annual spirituality conferences support all staff and governors in their professional development and formation and local cluster work allows the school to both share its excellent practice and learn from others. Pupil leadership is well developed through the Pupil Chaplains, Learning Council and Sports Crew. As one pupil stated, 'It is important that we all listen to each other and that everyone has a voice'. The new Parish Priest is keen to develop further links with the school and is holding weekly class and staff Masses. The school also makes very good use of its links with the neighbouring Convent, with the Sisters assisting in order to support the religious life of the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The requirements of the Religious Education Directory are being fully met and although the school uses The Way, The Truth and the Life as a basis, teachers plan creatively in order to deliver innovative lessons. Lessons were found to be good and outstanding. Progress in books demonstrates that pupils make very good progress and are developing very good standards of religious literacy. Diagnostic marking is responded to by pupils and allows for their thinking and reasoning skills to be extended or challenged. In outstanding lessons, children are challenged to respond to higher level questions and responses challenged by teachers to further learning. They enjoy their learning in RE because, as one pupil stated, 'Learning is fun and we don't have boring things'. Pupils have a very good understanding and knowledge of scripture across the school and how it applies to their daily lives. They learn about a range of other faiths, but are able to express security in their own faith, 'We believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Curriculum RE is well planned, tracked and assessed through the schools own use of pupil progress grids. Standards in RE are well monitored across the school with regular planning and book scrutiny, moderation meetings, learning walks and pupil interviews. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education is well embedded across the curriculum. Behaviour for learning was found to be outstanding in all lessons and around school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The welcome extended to all who enter the school is outstanding and underpinned by a common vision built on Gospel values and the Mission Statement of the school which means that everyone really is, 'welcoming and caring to all'. Parents spoke about their high regard for the school and of the great impact that the current leadership team have made. They are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of school life and appreciate the way that the school reaches out to them through projects like the advent and lent prayer packs. They attend assemblies in high numbers and were keen to highlight how the school supports all families, but 'particularly those who are struggling'. As one pupil said, 'We like to make sure that everyone in our school has a friend'. The open door policy adopted by the school is greatly appreciated by pupils and adults and parents commented on the effort made by staff to come out into the playground each morning to talk to parents and keep them informed. All members of the school community are rightly proud of their well-kept, bright and stimulating school environment. The half termly RE newsletter not only celebrates feast days within the churches

calendar but invites parents and carers to be part of the living witness through an active involvement in the faith life of the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

St Margaret Mary's is an extremely inclusive school that is outstanding in its welfare of and care for all members of the school community. Relationships across the school are excellent and children work well to support each other in their learning. Staff are approachable and parents feel able to talk with them about issues that concern them and state that their concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents were very clear in their appreciation for the "wonderful" support they receive from "all" members of staff who will always go the extra mile to support families if needed. Respect for the dignity of all is clearly evident across the school. Nurturing this caring ethos and the development of pupils' personal qualities are a very high priority for staff and Governors. Staff are models of care and respect. The behaviour of pupils in and out of school is exemplary, excellent behaviour by all the children was witnessed throughout the inspection, where children showed the ability to share, take turns and listen to each other. The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are excellent and it is working alongside other schools in its cluster to review and develop the SRE policy. The children are confident in expressing their feelings and can name who to ask for help when worried or concerned, they report that incidences of bullying are rare and if they occur are dealt with immediately. They speak about their teachers with fondness and appreciate all the help they are given to understand their faith. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in order to access the curriculum at the appropriate level. The school ensures that children's achievements are celebrated and that the most vulnerable are well cared for and listened to. As a result children develop care and respect for each other and God's creation; they also enjoy raising funds for more vulnerable groups around the world. The School Council ensures that pupil voice is heard at St Margaret Mary's and the children are encouraged in their efforts to take more of a leadership role in the life of the school and outreach to the wider community. The staff, parents, children and governors work very well together to promote the teachings of Jesus to "love thy neighbour as thyself" in this Christ-centred community ensuring that each person has 'life to the full'.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Worship is a real strength of the school. All around the school there were good examples of the opportunities for worship throughout the liturgical year demonstrating that worship is at the heart this school community. The importance of prayer and worship is expressed and witnessed through classroom acts of reflection and meditation, assemblies and the Prayer Life of the school is developmental, vibrant and relevant. The Catholic life of the school was clearly demonstrated around the school in many thoughtful and informative displays. Each classroom has an age appropriate and relevant focal point for prayer and these are clearly valued by the children. The children are happy to write their own prayers and to share their joy in praising God with others. The staff and children are confident in preparing and delivering acts of collective worship in different formats. The acts of prayer and worship observed were child centered, inclusive, thoughtful and relevant ensuring that children and adults were given the opportunity to pray together as a community. At the engaging whole school assembly the Y2 children led the school community in reflection and prayer on the importance of the Gospels in our lives today and challenged all present by asking "How are you going to be a disciple of Jesus today?" In this act of worship all pupils showed reverence and respect, were encouraged to speak to God in their own way, and enjoyed praising God in prayer and joyful singing. In RE lessons that included acts of worship, these special moments of quiet prayer and reflection were respected by the children and nurtured their personal relationship with God and one another. Sacred Scripture is clearly known, understood and made relevant throughout the school. It is, without doubt, a strength of the school. The introduction of pupil chaplains has given even greater opportunities for children to take a leading role and make an even more significant impact on prayer and worship throughout the school.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

All staff and children give witness to the beliefs and values of the Catholic faith. They clearly accept responsibility to bear witness to Christ's teaching in their daily lives. The Mission Statement is at the heart of the school and all at St Margaret Mary's school try to live it out on a daily basis. The children demonstrated quite clearly that peace, love, justice, truth, reconciliation and respect for all are promoted and are evidenced throughout the entire school community. Children are encouraged to reach out to those in need not just by their wonderful support for local, national and world charities but also in how they show respect, care, compassion and consideration of others. Relationships are excellent between all members of the school community. Staff are positive role models for the children promoting the ethos and values of the school and helping them to recognise that Jesus is with them in all aspects of school life. The school fosters a spirit of awe and wonder through religious education and the broader curriculum where children are encouraged to be good stewards of creation. The home, school and parish links are enhanced by the work of the catechists for the Sacramental Programme which was acknowledged and appreciated by the parents. A strong sense of belonging to the school community exists based on the teachings of Jesus and an explicit Catholic values-based culture permeates the whole of school which is clearly identifiable through the relationships, decision-making and actions. It is clear that all members of this school family meet God each day and do all they can to meet the challenges involved in this witness.

### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- To continue to develop pupil leadership in prayer and worship and to develop liturgies and para – liturgies which engage all and have a high level of impact
- To ensure that the exceptional practice observed is shared so that inspirational teaching is evident throughout the school

January 22nd 2015

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. We had a wonderful day and were only sorry that it was over so quickly. Thank you so much to everyone who helped us feel so welcome and at home.

You have many very good things happening in your school because you are all striving to live out your mission statement to try to follow Jesus in everything you do.

We were very impressed with your behaviour, respect for each other and the way you clearly are so proud of your school and your faith. Your teachers set great examples of living the Gospel and encourage you to do the same.

Your teachers are going to continue to develop you as leaders of prayer and worship at St Margaret Mary's and share all of the wonderful work that is going on in your school.

To all St Margaret Mary's pupil's we would like to say 'Thank you' and keep up your very high standards of behaviour, respect and love for one another.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Donna Kiernan

(Section 48 Inspector)

## **SUMMARY REPORT TO PARENTS**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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