



## SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the  
Archbishop of Southwark and inspection of  
Denominational Education under Section 48  
Of the Education Act 2005  
URN 118773

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School  
Trench Road  
Tonbridge Kent  
TN11 9NG

Inspection date: 18 March 2013

Chair of Governors:	Mr Anthony Sullivan
Headteacher:	Mrs Annemarie Whittle
Inspectors:	Mrs Angela O'Connor
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### EDUCATION COMMISSION

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is in the Tunbridge Wells Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent LA. The principal parish which the school serves is Corpus Christi, Tonbridge. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 65%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages. The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 318. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 10% of the pupils receive extra support in class. Almost all the pupils are of Western European heritage. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below average.

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## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

# Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Margaret Clitherow is an Outstanding school which places equal value on high academic achievement and pupils all-round personal development. The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors is outstanding and a key ingredient in the success of the school. The pupils are exceptionally well behaved, are courteous and friendly and care for each other. This is a thriving Catholic community with well-established links and a strong Catholic ethos. The dedicated staff team work together to ensure good relationships throughout the school and parish. Every member of the school community is recognised as having equal worth and strives to make the mission statement a real living experience. Pastoral care is outstanding and pupils' emotional wellbeing is supported through a curriculum rich in opportunities for spiritual reflection. Prayer underpins the life of the school and the Catholic life is evident in the many beautiful displays, artefacts and artwork around the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and are effusive in their praise. As one parent said, "We have nothing but praise for the school. As parents we are made to be fully part of the school community and we are involved in the spiritual life of the school".

All the issues from the previous Inspection have been addressed and any areas for development have been identified. The strong leadership and supportive staff team ensure that the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

## What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- While there is evidence of some very good work in many pupils' books this is not consistent throughout the school. Governors, headteacher and staff should undertake to review their expectations with regard to quality, quantity and presentation of work through sharing of good practice.

# The Catholic life of the school

## Leadership and management

GRADE 1

Leadership and management is outstanding, and underpin the success of the school. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors all work together to create a strong Catholic ethos. The highly effective headteacher is an inspirational leader, with a clear vision, which is shared with all staff. She has created a calm, spiritual and welcoming community in which all are included. The expertise of the headteacher has been recognised by the diocese by requesting her support for another school. The efficient deployment of the staff by the headteacher and the Governing Body has ensured that standards are maintained and there are opportunities for professional development for the staff. The Governing Body works closely with the senior leadership team and makes a positive contribution to the strategic direction of the school. The Chair of Governors has a very good working knowledge of the school and acts as a critical friend, maintaining a good balance between support and challenge.

The Mission Statement which is displayed prominently throughout the school, and is known by the pupils, reflects the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils are responsive, confident and articulate. They are polite, caring of each other and their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the dedication of the leadership and staff. As one parent said, "The school is quick to celebrate achievement and demonstrate inclusion, while maintaining a healthy pursuit of academic excellence." Good relationships are fostered through many school activities. In particular the evening to which parents, staff and governors are invited to discuss the school improvement plan, is well attended and valued by all.

There are strong links with the parish community and the parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school.

## Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

The school more than fulfils its obligation with regard to collective worship. There is a well-planned programme of Masses and assemblies following the liturgical year and supporting the Religious Education programme, which give the pupils excellent opportunities for participation. There are a variety of assemblies which include those led by the headteacher, class teachers and the pupils. Parents are invited to the assemblies where appropriate.

The assembly observed was led by the headteacher and was excellent. The story 'Guess how much I love you' was used as a starting point to show how much Jesus loves us and to highlight the events of Holy Week. The children listened with interest and engagement and responded enthusiastically to questions asked. The singing of 'Here I Am Lord' was joyful and uplifting and all participated. A highlight of the assembly was the spontaneous prayers from the pupils, who were confident to share their prayers with the whole school community.

The programme of Masses and liturgies in school include beginning and end of term Mass and Advent, Lent and Harvest liturgies. The deacon leads the Ash Wednesday service for the school and parish in the school hall. The school leads a parish Sunday Mass at least three times each year.

There are many opportunities in school for prayer and the response of the pupils to prayer and worship is outstanding. They know the traditional prayers of the Church and they have opportunities to write personal and reflective prayer. Lenten prayers were observed in a variety of formats appropriate to the age of the pupils. For example the pupils in the

reception class had made an Easter tree with their Lenten promises on eggs and shells.

Every class has a prayer table which were well used. At the beginning of each lesson a focal point, which included candles and music was assembled by the pupils. This was an intrinsic part of the lesson which created an atmosphere to enable spiritual reflection.

The school is fortunate to have a sanctuary which is used for quiet reflection, masses and collective worship. A gallery has been created which gives the pupils an opportunity to show their creativity linked to the church's liturgical year, as in the lovely Easter tree displayed, and a small outdoor area has been developed into a Peace garden.

## Community cohesion

GRADE 1

This is a fully inclusive school where all are welcomed and given the opportunity to succeed. Staff work hard to ensure that all the pupils are involved in school life and enjoy their learning and extra school activities. Pupils with special needs are valued by the school community and make good progress.

Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility in their own community through the peer mentoring scheme, buddy system and school council.

There are very strong links with the local, national and global communities. They have regular communication with the local residents committee and invite both the local residents and the parish community into school for several events during the year.

The school supports a variety of Charities such as CAFOD and the Cabrini Children's Society, and they are involved with the Malawi project in the parish church which sponsors a school in Malawi.

In response to community requests the school has established a thriving After School Club and more recently a Breakfast Club, which are run by members of staff.

The headteacher ensures that staff collaborate with other schools in the Deanery by taking part in moderation meetings, coordinator meetings and headteacher meetings. A Deanery mass for all those involved in education is held each year.

School staff are also very involved in the parish community, for example with sacramental preparation and the headteacher is a member of the parish council and supports the parish nursery.

# Religious Education

## Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. Pupils settle well into school and make good progress. This is sustained as they move through the school so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they have reached levels of attainment above the national averages. Expectations are high and pupil progress is tracked on a regular basis. Pupils in vulnerable groups have interventions put in place which ensure they access the curriculum and make good progress. There is a very good work ethic in the school, and they enjoy their lessons. Pupils are engaged, are attentive and remain focused on tasks set. Behaviour is excellent and any challenging behaviour is managed effectively. Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the moral, spiritual and social development of the pupils.

## Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 2

Teaching is consistently Good with elements of Outstanding. In the lessons observed questioning developed pupils understanding and gave them opportunities for empathy. A variety of techniques are used to engage and enthuse the pupils. Response partners, freeze frames, drama and scaffolding sheets were all used to good effect. For example in a Key Stage 1 class drama was used to tell the story of Palm Sunday which involved all the pupils. In a Key Stage 2 lesson which centred on the story of the Garden of Gethsemane, several interesting activities such as creating a tableau, sequencing the story and recounting the story as one of the disciples, enthused the pupils and reinforced the story. Learning Objectives were highlighted at the beginning of each lesson and detailed planning is shared across each phase. Activities are well matched to pupils needs and abilities and teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are always linked to prior learning and pupils talk confidently about their work. The learning support assistants are a strength of the school. They are well briefed, respond well to pupils needs and have a real impact on the pupils learning. There is evidence of good work and good presentation of work shown in pupils' books. However this is inconsistent across the school and would benefit from a sharing of good practice. This has been identified by the Religious Education coordinator as an area for development. Assessment is undertaken regularly and data is analysed and used to inform planning for effective provision. This is in line with the other core subjects and the Religious Education coordinator liaises with the assessment manager and the special needs coordinator. Books are marked regularly and are up to date with opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. The interactive whiteboard was used as a teaching aid.

## The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and 10% of the timetable is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. The school has recently implemented the 'Come and See' curriculum. Staff were well supported in the introduction of the new curriculum by the coordinator and senior leadership team. There are opportunities for the pupils to study other World Religions and resources have been purchased to support this. The Religious Education curriculum is enriched through events such as the Danceathon and the multi-cultural day, which gave pupils opportunities to see other cultures and religions at first hand. Cross curricula links such as art, drama and the use of a storyboard were used in lessons observed to support the curriculum. The curriculum is further enriched by the close collaboration of the staff and the positive attitude and enjoyment of the pupils. As one pupil said "I love RE. The teachers make it fun." Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters, meetings and homework diaries.

## Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 1

The Religious Education coordinator is passionate and committed with a strong sense of spiritual purpose. She is a member of the senior leadership team, which ensures that Religious Education has a high profile in the school. She works closely with the headteacher and they share a clear vision. Her action plan is detailed and focussed on implementing 'Come and See'. She has a good understanding of standards in Religious Education through regular monitoring and is well aware of areas for development. Her monitoring role includes lesson observation, book and planning scrutiny and discussions with both staff and pupils. She has developed links with other local Catholic schools to moderate work and to ensure that standards and levels are validated. She is supportive of staff and leads staff meetings and Inset when appropriate. She liaises with Deanery colleagues and attends Diocesan courses. The Governing Body is kept well informed as to the progress of Religious Education as the coordinator is the staff governor and gives regular updates and feedback to the governors.

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