

# St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

URN: 138814

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

21–22 May 2025

## 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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

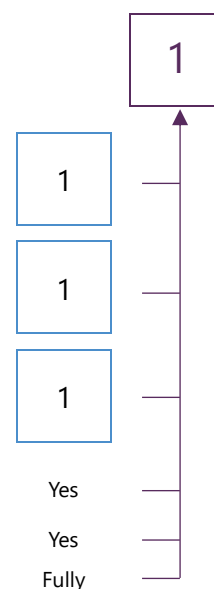
#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



## Compliance statement

- Religious education is taught in line with the bishops' requirements.
- The curriculum incorporates a minimum of 10% allocated to religious education.
- St Margaret Clitherow has fully responded to all action points from the previous inspection on 29 January 2018.

## What the school does well

- St Margaret Clitherow provides an environment which accurately reflects the school's outstanding Catholic life and mission.
- The school has developed outstanding and sustained links with the parish and wider community.
- Staff and pupils demonstrate exemplary relationships.
- Leaders, including governors, give high priority to religious education, ensuring effective monitoring and engaging in well-targeted planning to drive continuous improvement.
- Pupils are confident and enthusiastic leaders of prayer and liturgy.

## What the school needs to improve

- Support staff and pupils to reference Catholic social teaching explicitly across curriculum learning.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to ask insightful and challenging questions to deepen their religious understanding.
- Ensure learning outcomes are consistently communicated clearly and effectively by all teachers in religious education lessons.

## 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

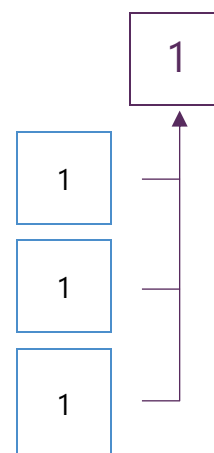
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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 at St Margaret Clitherow demonstrate an exceptional and lived commitment to the Catholic life and mission of the school. They actively and joyfully serve others, embodying the call of the gospel to love and compassion. Pupils' involvement in social outreach initiatives reflect a good understanding of Catholic social teaching; examples include the Solidarity Sisters' fundraising event for Cafod, and plant sales to raise funds for the local community. Parish ambassadors, who regularly contribute to parish Masses, and the involvement of over 50 members of the school choir for First Holy Communion celebrations, highlight the dedication of pupils to the wider faith community. As the headteacher affirms, 'Pupils see it's their mission to love people', a mission they fulfil through action, prayer, and witness. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging and are deeply proud of their school. Their engagement in chaplaincy and social justice campaigns (such as fundraising for Water Aid), affirm their role as confident spiritual leaders. The parish priest recognises that, 'There is a tangible feel of the Holy Spirit in St Margaret Clitherow', which is testimony to the vibrant, inclusive, and faith-filled ethos demonstrated by the pupils themselves.

The school provides an outstanding witness to its Catholic identity, which is fully embedded and visible in all aspects of school life. The environment is welcoming and inclusive, rooted in gospel values, reflecting the dignity of every individual. The mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you', is both prominently displayed and authentically lived through daily actions and relationships across the community. Prayer and reflection are central to school life, supported

by high-quality, thoughtfully maintained prayer areas, such as the Pope Francis station, which offer pupils meaningful opportunities for contemplation and spiritual growth. Staff model the school's values through strong, respectful relationships, creating a culture of care and mutual respect. New teachers feel supported and valued. The school embraces and celebrates other faiths and cultures with sensitivity, reflecting the diversity of its local context. Pastoral care is exemplary, with programmes like 'outside play and learning' (OPAL) promoting leadership, resilience, and social development. The chaplaincy provision offers inclusive opportunities for prayer and liturgy, accessible to all pupils. Relationships, sex and health education is well-planned, with clear evidence of pupil understanding in areas such as healthy relationships and online safety. Catholic life is joyfully celebrated and meaningfully lived out, forming the heart of this vibrant, faith-filled community.

Leaders and governors exemplify a clear, ambitious, and Christ-centred vision for the Catholic life and mission of the school. This vision is deeply embedded in all aspects of school life and is consistently lived out by staff and pupils. A recent staff survey confirmed that 100% of staff understand and actively embody the mission. Leaders are unwavering in their belief that every pupil is made in the image of God and should be valued, heard, and enabled to flourish. The bishop's vision for the diocese is fully embraced and is visibly celebrated throughout the school, for example through activities linked to the Jubilee Year of Hope. The school enjoys strong relationships with its parishes; clergy regularly celebrate liturgies and pupils actively participate in Masses, including for the feast of St Margaret Clitherow. Governance is highly effective, with rigorous monitoring of Catholic life and mission through pupil voice, learning walks, and a well-planned evaluation calendar. The curriculum is centred around gospel values, with Catholic social teaching beginning to inform some areas of learning. High-quality professional development ensures all staff contribute meaningfully to the mission. Parental engagement is strong, with 98% affirming their understanding of the school's Catholic identity.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

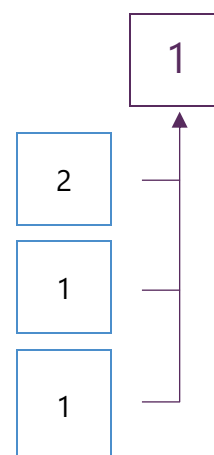
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 make good progress in religious education. They are developing secure subject knowledge, supported by regular retrieval practice. While this strategy is generally effective, some pupils report that extended retrieval activities occasionally limit the time available for new learning. Pupils across the school are increasingly religiously literate and use key theological vocabulary with confidence and accuracy. Older pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of religious commitment, making links between scripture and the sacraments: for example, connecting the story of the Good Samaritan to the anointing of the sick. Younger pupils can confidently retell biblical stories, such as that of Zacchaeus, while Early Years Foundation Stage pupils articulate the concept of 'good news' through the story of Jesus blessing the children. Pupils are able to relate their learning to their own lives and to the school's gospel values, such as respect and compassion. They engage well with creative tasks, demonstrating enjoyment and active participation; however, pupils do not always have the opportunity to ask intuitive questions to further develop their understanding. Teachers do not consistently include accurate feedback, limiting pupils' ability to know how to further improve their work; however, good presentation and extended writing are evident across year groups. Behaviour is exemplary, and religious education outcomes have remained high for the past three years.

Teaching in religious education is of a consistently high standard. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and confidence, enabling them to make meaningful theological connections which deepen pupils' understanding. In one example, a teacher skilfully linked the concept of energy to the Holy Spirit, enhancing both spiritual and curricular learning. Staff hold high expectations and are deeply committed to delivering the curriculum in a way that reflects the school's gospel-centred ethos. The behaviour curriculum, known as the 'SMC Way', is fully

embedded, resulting in exemplary pupil engagement and respect during religious education lessons. Planning is meticulously resourced and builds effectively on prior knowledge, with clear sequencing across year groups. Teachers employ a broad range of inclusive strategies, such as visual aids, sequencing tools, talk partners, and mind maps, to ensure all pupils are supported and challenged appropriately. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to enhance progress. Teachers routinely check for understanding and celebrate pupils' effort, fostering motivation and participation. 'Wonder moments' offer meaningful opportunities for spiritual reflection, with pupils making personal connections to their faith. Lessons are enriched with prayer and liturgy, promoting spiritual development.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a deep and sustained commitment to the provision and continual development of religious education. The 'Come and See' programme is fully compliant with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and receives curriculum time, resources, and staffing equivalence for core subjects. Religious education is a high priority in the life of the school. Leaders ensure all staff, including teaching assistants, receive regular, high-quality professional development, with strong links to diocesan training. The subject leader models exemplary practice and shares expertise across the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The religious education curriculum is coherently sequenced and enriched through art, drama, scripture, and liturgical celebration. It is carefully planned to meet the needs of all learners, using adaptive teaching strategies and high-quality visual resources. Lessons follow a consistent structure including prayer, wonder moments, and reflection, underpinned by awareness of cognitive load. Monitoring of religious education is robust, informed by pupil outcomes, book scrutiny, and pupil voice. The trust's tracking systems and curriculum standards committee ensure progress is reviewed and acted upon. Governors receive detailed reports and engage confidently in strategic discussions, holding leaders to account with insight and clarity. This results in sustained excellence and continuous improvement in religious education.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

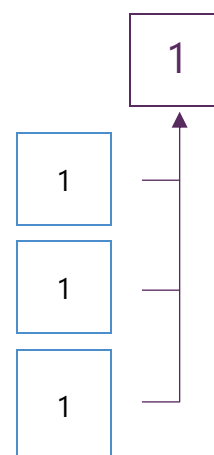
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupils at St Margaret Clitherow engage in prayer and liturgy with deep reverence, joy, and a clear understanding of its significance in their daily lives. Prayerful silence, reflection, and respect are consistently evident. During a pupil-led celebration of the word on the theme of *Witness*, the Minnie Vinnies confidently connected the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' to the school's gospel values, demonstrating the ability to apply scripture meaningfully. Pupils actively and consciously participate in hymn practice, entering and exiting the hall with reverence. Floor books across all year groups provide clear evidence of the breadth and consistency of prayer and liturgy. Pupils demonstrate ownership by setting up prayer tables with theological understanding: for example, selecting Marian symbols during May and using liturgical colours appropriately. A wide range of Catholic traditions, including the Rosary, Lectio Divina, and spontaneous prayer, are embedded in school life. Pupils regularly plan, lead, and evaluate celebrations of the word using diocesan resources. Their reflections feed directly into future liturgical planning. Pupils articulate how prayer influences their behaviour and decisions, describing its impact on their relationships and social action. As one pupil stated, 'Our mission helps us love one another', evidencing a good understanding of Catholic social teaching.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of daily life. The environment clearly reflects this through well-maintained displays, prayer stations, scripture, and dedicated prayer spaces which visibly promote the Catholic ethos. There is a deeply embedded and natural rhythm of prayer which mirrors the liturgical life of the Church and includes a range of prayer forms integrated into the daily timetable. The school offers a broad, rich variety of prayer experiences, including class-based celebrations, whole school liturgies, and pupil-led celebrations of the word. Scripture is carefully selected in accordance with the liturgical calendar, such as the Marian devotions during

May. Staff are excellent role models, demonstrating skill and reverence in leading prayer and facilitating pupil participation that is age-appropriate and progressively builds independence. Music, art, and drama are integral features, used confidently to enrich liturgical experiences. Prayer spaces, including a dedicated prayer garden and prayer room, are regularly accessed by pupils for personal reflection. The school has strong parish links, enhancing pupil engagement in the wider liturgical life of the Church. Parental participation is encouraged through shared celebrations of the word, and collaboration with parish groups further exemplifies the school's commitment to living out its mission in community.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a highly strategic approach to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of prayer and liturgy. The school's policy is thoughtfully formulated, with clear aims that ensure that prayer is integral to daily school life. A detailed progression document maps out the development of pupils' liturgical skills and understanding, showing which specific prayers are taught in each key stage and how pupil involvement evolves from year to year. This document is regularly reviewed to ensure relevance and impact. Prayer and liturgy are carefully structured across the school calendar, incorporating celebrations of the Eucharist, holy days of obligation, and major seasons of the liturgical year. Pupil-led celebrations, including those in class and whole-school settings, are central to provision. Leaders prioritise high-quality professional development for all staff, supported by external experts, ensuring confident and skilled delivery across all phases. Evaluation is rigorous and continuous, involving pupils, staff, and governors, who place a high priority on its quality and impact. Pupils demonstrate exceptional independence in planning for prayer and liturgy, particularly in upper Key Stage 2. Prayer spaces, including gardens and a dedicated prayer room, are meaningfully used by lay chaplains and pupil groups, embedding prayer into the fabric of school life.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	138814
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8923321
Full postal address of the school	St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Mildenhall Crescent, Bestwood Park, Nottingham, NG5 5RS
School phone number	0115 915 0296
Headteacher	Sarah Sweeney-McGinty
Chair of local governing body	Patricia Bradley
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-margaretclitherow.nottingham.sch.uk">www.st-margaretclitherow.nottingham.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Our Lady Of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Choose an item.
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 January 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1 - Outstanding

## The inspection team

Patricia Chapman  
Alison Dunne

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

