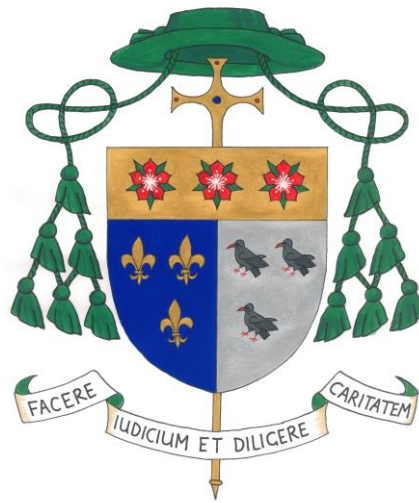


Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rotheram Avenue, Luton, LU1 5PP

DfS School No: 821/3355

URN: 109634

Headteacher: Mrs C Cassidy
Chair of Governors: Mr M Fielding

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Flanagan
Associate Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan

Date of inspection: 29th January 2013
Date report issued: 14th February 2013

Date of last inspection: 25th June 2009

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and in partnership with
Luton Local Authority

Information about the school

St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary is a large and expanding primary school. It serves the parishes of St Margaret of Scotland, The Holy Ghost and Our Lady Help of Christians. There are 555 children on roll of whom 428 are Catholic. More than half the children come from ethnic minority backgrounds with approximately one third speaking English as an additional language though nearly all of them with a good level of fluency. Over a fifth of the children are on the school's register of Special Educational Needs but the number at school action plus and on a statement of special educational need is below the national average. Since the last inspection there have been many staffing changes with a completely new management team now in place. There are 25 teachers on the staff of whom almost two thirds are Catholic.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Satisfactory 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Margaret of Scotland Primary School is a good Catholic school. The well-behaved pupils are proud of their school and the parents express overwhelming support for the school and its work. Leadership is good and senior managers have clear plans to take the school forward. The provision for prayer and worship is good as is the support offered by the energetic chaplaincy team. The overall standard of teaching is good, with lessons being very thoroughly planned. Pupil attainment is good and is improving. The school provides a good quality RE curriculum.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

All the issues raised in the last Section 48 inspection report have been addressed. A new mission statement has been agreed and is in place, though not all the younger pupils are secure in their knowledge of the key words. Good assessment procedures in RE are in use and good records are being kept by the school. There are good arrangements for teachers to compare pupils' work and so ensure that pupil attainment levels are consistent throughout the school.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is generally good, though it concentrates on the school's very detailed plans for raising the standards of teaching and pupil attainment. It does not fully reflect the good quality of the Catholic life in the school. It has been compiled as a result of hard work by senior leaders. Other staff and the governors were invited to share their opinions of the school, its life and its standards and to make contributions to the final document.

The headteacher and the senior leadership team share a clear vision for the school and its future. They have a good grasp of what is needed for the school to make continued progress. They are supported by the staff, who work very hard for the children in their care. The governors too are dedicated to the school and are aware of their strategic role in the school's development.

The current school leadership, together with the governing body, has a good capacity to maintain development and improvement within the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the effective new procedures to raise standards of pupil attainment in RE
- Develop strategies for measuring and recording pupil responses to the provision for Catholic life in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

The children play a constructive role in the life of the school. They appreciate the Catholic mission of the school and behave in a responsible and caring manner. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities that lead to others being helped such as fund raising for charitable causes. They are reflective and value the spiritual opportunities that are presented to them. Individuals relish the opportunity to influence the decision making process in the school through their involvement in school council and the chaplaincy team. They display the capacity to play a greater role in the Catholic life of the school.

Many children speak enthusiastically about participating in assemblies and in leading prayers in class and in small group situations. Some children have been commissioned as Ministers of the Word and are very proud to carry out their duties. During periods of worship, children are respectful and reverent. They can describe why times of prayer are of value to them and have a good knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church. Singing in the observed assembly was very good. Prayer and worship make a good contribution to the well being of the children.

The chaplaincy provision makes a good contribution to the lives of the children. The children are very confident about being able to access help if they should feel to be in need of any kind. The chaplaincy team offers a wide range of support to parents and staff. The team enriches the school in ways that the children might not immediately appreciate such as the work of planning liturgies, supporting teaching and supplying resources, all of which enrich the life of the school and benefit the children directly.

Children make good progress in RE during their time in the school. Their progress is now monitored very thoroughly. They behave well in lessons, showing interest and applying themselves well to their work. They display a good knowledge and understanding of the work they have covered. Attainment in RE is good and improving

Leaders and Managers

Grade 2

The promotion of the Catholic life of the school is good. Leaders and managers are very committed to the mission of the school and seek to offer a broad and balanced curriculum. In this they are supported by the staff. Resources are allocated to create a school that promotes spirituality and the care of others as integral parts of its life. Standards of spiritual and moral development are good. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school are subjective and lack rigour.

The monitoring of teaching and learning in RE is good. It is conducted rigorously and systematically. Planning is clear and much work has been undertaken to introduce and support the new RE scheme "Come and See". There is a rigorous programme of lesson observations to raise standards of teaching and a support programme to share knowledge of the faith across the school. There is a good programme for scrutinising pupils' books and providing feedback to staff. Outcomes in RE are good and improving as a result of the rigour employed in this area.

The members of the governing body are very committed to the school. They carry out their duties as laid down by the Catholic Church and the law efficiently. The governing body is well organised and has a clear structure that allows members to gain an overview of the work of the school. Consequently, governors are in a position to monitor and question outcomes. They have an accurate perception of the challenges facing the school.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is fully inclusive in nature and all are made welcome within it. School leaders and staff value and respect diversity and this is reflected in the attitude of the pupils. There is a good range of activities within the wider curriculum to promote community cohesion. Pupils were able to give examples of charities that they have supported. These include charities at local, national and international levels. School leaders work hard to engage with parents and carers.

Provision

Grade 2

The provision for prayer and collective worship is good. Acts of worship are well planned and reflect the Church's year. There is a prayer garden and a very tranquil prayer room, which is greatly valued by the whole school community. There are appropriate prayer foci in all classrooms and some of these are very good. A prayer book of high quality has been produced for each pupil. Prayer is an integral part of the school day. The provision of chaplaincy is also good. The chaplaincy team is large and well led. It provides a wide range of support to pupils, parents and staff. It promotes spirituality across the school and makes a good contribution to the life of the school.

Overall, the standard of teaching is good. Although some lessons were only of a satisfactory level, one displayed outstanding elements. All lessons are planned in detail and there is clear evidence of different work being provided to meet children's individual needs. ICT is widely used to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers spend a lot of time marking books and adding advice to help the children in their learning. Pieces of good work are selected for inclusion in class celebration books which are a pleasure to examine. Children are excited and motivated by the prospect of having their work included in these books.

The RE curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual, cultural and moral development of the pupils. The programme for sex and personal relationship education is good and well structured. The school provides opportunities for religious experiences outside the classroom through its involvement with the local parish and in shared activities with the schools of the St Alban's partnership such as the "Big Sing" and the "Little Sing". The school meets the Bishops' Conference requirement to spend 10% of its curriculum time teaching RE.

Assessment and academic guidance in RE are good. Formal assessments of each pupil's progress are made each term and the tracking of pupil progress by senior leaders is outstanding. Moderation of assessments is undertaken with other schools in the Catholic partnership. Staff are increasingly using data to improve their targeting of the work provided for the children in their charge. There is a coding system to identify pupils of different abilities which is clear and easy to use. Pupils are beginning to use comments made by teachers in their books to help them in their learning. Some are writing replies to teachers' comments which reflects their desire to improve their work.

The inspectors would like to thank all members of the community of St Margaret's for their warm welcome, their interest in the inspection process and their willingness to answer all their questions.