



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate  
Little Chell Lane, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 6LZ

Inspection dates:

11-12 November 2019

Lead Inspector:

John Farrell

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Good

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Good*

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Christ is at the centre of the school's daily routine.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is communicated well to all pupils. As a result, they respond to the opportunities they are given by acting on the Catholic values they are taught.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is outstanding. She has high expectations which are clearly communicated to all staff, who are effectively supported to meet them.
- Attainment and progress in Key Stage 4 Religious Education are almost always in line with diocesan averages, or better.
- Pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, play an important part in Collective Worship and understand its importance.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Pupils are not always proactively contributing to the evaluation of Catholic Life, as a result their role in improving planning is not yet fully realised.
- Generally, pupils do not experience a wide variety of prayer styles.
- Pupils' role in the leadership of prayer is in its infancy.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupil involvement in the evaluation of Catholic Life to enable them to lead improvements in this area.
- Broaden the provision of contemporary prayer.
- Develop the skills necessary for pupils to independently design and plan their own acts of Collective Worship.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Good

### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

#### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The school is guided by the five core principles of Lasallian education. Because these have been adopted as the 'St Margaret Ward Way', pupils are aware of the responsibilities they have for others, as part of the Catholic community.
- Pupils' awareness of each other as creations of God, made in His image and likeness, is developing. Consequently, behaviour around the school site is generally good.
- Through the recently devised 'touching hearts' curriculum, pupils benefit from an enriched personal development programme. As part of this, pupils are developed holistically, with clear learning intentions that are firmly rooted in a Catholic context. As a result, pupils feel that the school is preparing them well for a faith-filled adult life.
- Pupils respond well to the chaplaincy provision of the school, including retreats. Because pupils are enabled to take part in day and residential retreats, they develop spiritually as they take time out of school life to reflect on their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The pastoral care of pupils is strong. A new behaviour policy has been implemented and is centred on the concept that each individual is called by God to discern and live out their vocation. This policy has raised standards within the school.
- Relationships and sex education is taught firmly within the context of the Church's teachings.
- Pupils participate in charity and outreach work as a way of embracing the school's mission. They work with international, national and local organisations in order to live out Jesus' command to "love your neighbour". Not only do pupils participate in fundraising activities, they raise awareness of others' needs by asking the community to pray for them.

- The staff's commitment to the Catholic Life of the school is strong; they are united together in their contribution to the common good. Their passion for education and the high expectations they have for their pupils are clear for all to see.
- The school's physical environment is an impressive expression of its Catholic identity, the school displays pupils' artwork alongside more traditional religious imagery. These act as a clear reminder of the school's ethos, which support the vision of senior leaders.
- All members of staff are good role models for pupils. They emulate the standards of behaviour expected and because staff participate fully in the Catholic Life of the school and treat pupils with respect, pupils live up to the school's expectations.
- Pastoral care for staff is also good. Senior leaders have fostered an open-door culture, which staff feel is supportive. In particular, staff feel supported by the headteacher.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school**

- Remarkable steps to improve the school have been taken since the last inspection.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership; he sees the Catholic Life of the school as a core responsibility and consequently, effects positive change promptly.
- The headteacher works highly effectively to ensure that the Catholic faith permeates all aspects of his work. For example, core values from the Gospel pervade the school's approach to behaviour management and discipline.
- The honesty and openness with which the headteacher works has revitalised staff and helped to establish effective working relationships between school leaders and the main staff body.
- Improvements to Catholic Life are planned and address the school's needs. Leaders anticipate the positive impact that developments will have, and ensure they remain accountable for securing them through the effective support and challenge of the governors.
- Leaders have identified the need for Catholic Life to now be developed in terms of promoting the Lasallian world development projects. This development also lends itself to enabling individual subject areas to actively promote Catholic Life more explicitly.
- The governing body has appointed a link governor to work with the PICCL. They meet termly to monitor the progress of improvement plans. Consequently, governors can verify the accuracy of leaders' monitoring and evaluation.
- Senior leaders have designed an induction programme for all staff new to the school, which covers their responsibilities towards the Catholic Life of the school. Furthermore, bespoke support is available to members of staff, as and when needed.
- Staff have been provided with lots of training about Catholic Life, but there have been few actions arising from it. Consequently, development of Catholic Life rarely occurs as a direct result of continual professional development (CPD). CPD should be planned so that it directly addresses the school's areas for development and further improves its quality of provision.
- The PICCL must empower and trust staff to contribute towards the on-going development of Catholic Life and thus enable a universal approach to it.
- The school should now grow its apostolic core of staff in order to capitalise their gifts and talents, using them to further enhance the school's practice.

- In line with best practice across the Archdiocese, governors should consider incorporating the role of PICCL onto the senior leadership team to afford the position the appropriate levels of status and priority within the school.
- Governors do not have a firm strategic hand on the Catholic Life of the school. Whilst leaders receive excellent and much-valued support from directors of the multi academy company and the school improvement partner, there is a need for more rigorous support, challenge and scrutiny from the local governing body.
- Governors have ensured that the school adheres to additional requirements of the Archbishop.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

<b>The quality of Religious Education</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Outstanding

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education** **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The progress of pupils in Religious Education is on a sustained upward trend. This is because of the strong vision of the subject leader and her ability to bring about change.
- Progress levels in Religious Education at this school are broadly in line with diocesan averages.
- Over the last two years, disadvantaged pupils made slightly more progress in Religious Education than their non-disadvantaged peers. Identifying that pupils with special needs need further support to improve the amount of progress they make in Religious Education, the school has implemented strategies, which has already seen the progress of these pupils improve since the launch of the new GCSE specification.
- Pupils are highly motivated and keen to succeed in Religious Education. As a result, they are enabled to use their acquired knowledge to reflect on the theological and ethical concepts they are presented with. For example, during the inspection Year 11 pupils were challenged to explain JL Mackie's 'inconsistent triad'; an opportunity that they relished.
- Because the overwhelming majority of teaching in Religious Education is at least good, pupils' engagement in lessons is outstanding and they model excellent behaviours for learning.
- The department successfully engages parents to enable them to support their children's learning. A study session programme has been devised to equip parents to do this, which is so effective that other core departments in the school now replicate this initiative. Particular attention is given to pupils and families from disadvantaged backgrounds in this area of the school's work.
- Within the Religious Education department, teachers adopt a consistent approach to delivering lessons. Consequently, standards continue to rise, and much progress is

made within individual lessons. Religious Education is at the forefront of developments in teaching & learning in this school.

- The school has taken effective action to reduce the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in GCSE Religious Education. However, the attainment of pupils with special needs remains low in Key Stage 4, when compared against the attainment of similar pupils across the Archdiocese.
- The standard of written work in exercise books is very good. Pupils value Religious Education as a core subject. As a result, they respond well to the challenge to think more deeply about the topics covered by the curriculum. Because of this, pupils are challenged to think beyond age-related expectations.
- Lessons in Religious Education are well matched to the needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils are enabled to build on their prior knowledge in order to make progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in the Religious Education department is very secure. They use this to plan lessons in the main school that deepen pupils' knowledge. However, there is a need for this to become more consistent across the teaching of General Religious Education in the sixth form.
- Pupils enjoy a range of teaching strategies. Lessons always recap prior knowledge before moving pupils on to the next level in a variety of ways. This further contributes to pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Teachers are well skilled in their use of time to advance pupils' learning. Questioning is used to high effect to reshape tasks and provide challenge, so that all learners advance in their understanding.
- There is a common approach to feedback across the department, which positively impacts on pupils' learning.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Religious Education fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and meets the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop in relation to General Religious Education.
- The subject is comparable to other core subjects in terms of finance, accommodation and resourcing.
- A well-conceived department improvement plan ensures that the quality of education continues to advance. Leaders and governors ensure that this is closely monitored through various strategies. As a result, relevant members of staff remain fully accountable in their roles.
- Because of the systems in place for monitoring and evaluation, all stakeholders are acutely aware of the department's strengths, as well as its areas for development.
- School leadership ensures that the subject leader is enabled to attend diocesan training regularly and has very good working relationships with diocesan advisors. As a result, the school is especially well-informed of both local and national developments in Religious Education and works quickly to implement changes.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is outstanding. She manages her team well to ensure that standards continue to rise by offering support and challenge to them, as and when necessary. Her innovative vision permeates throughout the department; she has a concrete and positive impact on the Religious Education at this school.

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

<b>The quality of Collective Worship</b>	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Good

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**  
**The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- Pupils act with reverence during acts of Collective Worship and respond to the stimuli they are presented with. During the inspection, pupils were observed marking Armistice Day, in which they were not only remembering those who have fought in wars but were praying for all those who have died.
- As part of the touching hearts curriculum, pupils write their own prayers which are collated in large books. As a result, pupils are frequently provided with the opportunity to reflect on certain themes, as well as offer private intentions.
- Pupils' leadership of prayer regularly occurs, particularly through the assembly programme. As a result, they are growing in both confidence and spirituality. However, pupils would benefit further from more widespread opportunities to plan their own paraliturgies.
- Although pupils experience prayers daily and appreciate the opportunities they are given, the provision of a wider and more contemporary range of prayer styles would further contribute to their spiritual development.
- Collective Worship is planned for the entire academic year. Themes are selected that reflect the Church's liturgical year. Consequently, pupils know the key seasons and feasts within the Catholic tradition.
- Monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship takes place and is the responsibility of senior leaders. Findings bring about change in provision, though this responsibility could be more widely shared with other staff and pupils.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Staff who lead Collective Worship do so skilfully and with confidence. They are good role models to the rest of the staff; as a result, all staff are clear about the school's expectations.
- Leaders have a profound understanding of the Church's liturgical year, meaning that all acts of Collective Worship are meaningful and in tune with key seasons and feasts.
- Collective Worship does not always feature explicitly as part of school improvement planning. Consequently, its monitoring and evaluation does not always contribute to informed improvements. Leaders have self-identified this as an area for development.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	140149
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	1105
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Gillian Meller
Headteacher	Dominic McKenna
Telephone number	01782 883000
Website address	<a href="http://www.stmargaretward.co.uk">www.stmargaretward.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@smwca.org.uk">office@smwca.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	November 2014

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy is a slightly larger than average school located in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent. The school serves several parishes: Sacred Heart, Tunstall; St Patrick's, Packmoor; St Joseph's, Burslem; St Joseph's, Goldenhill; St John's, Kidsgrove; Sacred Heart, Hanley; English Martyrs, Biddulph; St George & St Martin's, Birches Head; Our Lady & St Benedict's, Abbey Houlton and St Mary's, Norton.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 45.9%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is average.
- Since the last inspection a new principal and vice principal have been appointed.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: John Farrell and Greg McClarey.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across several Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.



- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the board of directors, the Catholic senior executive leader (CSEL) and the school improvement partner, the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the principal, the line manager for the Religious Education department, the Religious Education subject leader, the PICCL and priest chaplain.
- The inspectors attended acts of Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school's Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR), the school development plan, the RE action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.