



St Bede's Catholic Primary School Bedlington

URN: 148283

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

03–04 July 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Leaders have a very clear vision for the development of all aspects of religious education and are passionate and determined in their pursuit of the very best outcomes for all pupils.
- The development of prayer and liturgy in school has had a transformational effect on the school community.
- The priority given to the professional development of staff has been central to the recent improvements in the provision of religious education.

- Staff are positive role models. Through their relationships with each other and the love and care shown for all pupils, they bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission.

What the school needs to improve

- To develop pupils' ability to articulate the theology underpinning their actions as a clear expression of the school's mission statement.
- When discussing their learning in religious education lessons, pupils need to develop their ability to speak confidently, using subject specific vocabulary to describe what they have learnt.
- Pupils need to develop their understanding of how to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy and be able to articulate the ways in which these experiences have led to action.

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

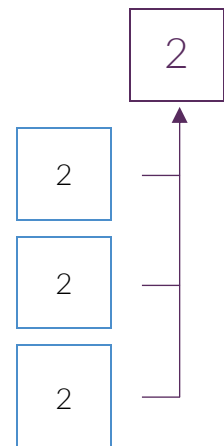
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 understand the distinctive Catholic identity of their school and value this. 'We are all living examples of Christ'. They know that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus. One pupil said, 'We must love people as we want to be loved; Jesus is our example and we follow in Jesus' footsteps'. Pupils express an understanding that they are valued and cared for as individuals, made in the image and likeness of God. They have a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and religions, especially Judaism and Islam. This was evident throughout all pupil voice activities. Through their work on stewardship, pupils could articulate their personal responsibility to care for our common home stating, 'God created men and women to love and care for the world.' Another pupil commented, 'We have a duty to nurture, respect and be responsible for the word for future generations.' They talk enthusiastically about the Matthew Project and Big Lent Walk. Through the simple opportunities presented to them, pupils respond well to the demands of Catholic social teaching, supporting those in need locally, nationally and globally. Pupils at St Bede's are very happy, confident and feel secure. The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and throughout the school.

Christ is at the heart of St Bede's. There is a lived sense of community which is evident in the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and the strong culture of welcome. Staff are positive role models for pupils who report that 'Teachers show us love and kindness, they inspire us to look after each other.' The Pupil of the Week and Community Award is valued by parents and pupils. They talk enthusiastically about the members of their school and wider community they have nominated for this special recognition, acknowledging Christ's presence in others. The mission statement expresses the school's special charism, however some pupils are unable to articulate exactly how this informs and shapes their actions. Staff provide supportive pastoral

care for pupils and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable. Parents reinforced this as they described situations where the inclusive nature of the school has benefited all pupils, no one is excluded. One parent commented that, 'the Spirit is moving' in St Bede's. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education meets both statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders ensure that St Bede's is a community of faith, love and respect. . The developments that have taken place in a short space of time show their determination in the pursuit of the mission of the school; they are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership. The new leadership team have been welcomed enthusiastically by the staff at St Bede's. Governors explain that the Catholic life of the school has quickly become explicit, visible and is 'owned'; it is viewed as a core leadership responsibility. One governor stated, 'We want the best Christ centred education for our children.' Policies and procedures are being well embedded to demonstrate the Catholic mission of the school. Staff comment that 'Everyone is involved in the Catholic life of the school; we are supportive of each other.' Leaders and governors work well with the local parish. St Bede's Bugle News is a wonderful example of how the school celebrates its Catholic life and mission with all in the community. There is a strong commitment to the physical and mental well-being of staff. Leaders and governors ensure that all decisions made respect and reflect the needs of the staff and pupils given the flux of change that has occurred recently.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

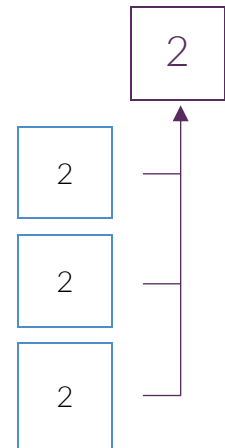
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing knowledge, understanding and skills that are reflective of the planned curriculum. They clearly enjoy their learning and approach lessons with interest and enthusiasm. One pupil stated, 'There is nothing I don't like about RE, lessons are fun. 'Where teaching is good, key questions are used to elicit further understanding and develop knowledge. Another pupil commented, 'Oscar Romero sacrificed his life for his own people, he is an inspiration. Everyone deserves to be treated equally.' Teaching in the Early Years provides a strong foundational knowledge where skilful teaching and high levels of modelling ensure children make good progress. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils produce work that is presented well. However, pupils speak about what they have learned with limited use of subject specific vocabulary. They were often not able to answer questions in a religiously literate way or able to reflect spiritually. Nonetheless, pupils show a willingness to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills, 'I enjoy using the Bible in class, Micah is a good example to us, I have used some of these quotes from scripture in my writing.'

Teachers are developing greater confidence in their subject knowledge and are committed to the value of religious education. With the intense and high levels of support that has been put in place by the leadership team, planning has been prioritised to ensure that pupils learn well. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching. A rigorous coaching and mentoring model has ensured that teachers feel much more confident in the delivery of religious education. They have deepened their understanding and valued working together in phases to ensure there is consistency, an agreed structure and clearer progression. Pupils have the opportunity to present their learning using a variety of forms to meet their differing needs. Teachers use questioning during lessons which is beginning to deepen and explore the impact

religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils: 'Describe the lifestyle that Pope Francis encourages Christians to live' and 'What does it mean to walk humbly with God?' Teachers celebrate pupil effort in a personal way, 'You're really good at forgiving your friends' leading to higher levels of motivation and engagement.

Leaders have placed a high priority on the professional development of teachers to ensure that religious education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects. These high-quality opportunities have resulted in gains in both subject and pedagogical development. Following rigorous self-evaluation and through prioritising staff voice, the subject leader for religious education has taken strategic action which has led to good outcomes. She is tenacious in her vision for teaching and learning and has a good level of expertise in securing this vision. There are clear structures in place to induct new members of staff so teachers feel well-supported. 'The support I have received has transformed my lessons, deepened my knowledge and therefore the pupils' knowledge.' Staff comment that the observations and feedback they have received has been 'invaluable'. This rigorous monitoring has also focused on the importance of gathering pupil voice to ensure that their feedback is included in the analysis of what is working well and the planned next steps for improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school and, as a result, they feel much more informed. They are extremely supportive of the new leadership team and feel further empowered stating their role is now more 'tangible'.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They participate in them with respect, joining in community and spontaneous prayer, singing enthusiastically and undertaking ministries willingly and with confidence. Whenever acts of worship take place, there is a stillness, calmness and prayerful atmosphere created by all in the community. Appropriate to their age, pupils understand a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. They work well with their teachers to prepare engaging and, on occasion, moving experiences of prayer which have good links to the liturgical year. The use of Scripture is prioritised and a clear mission is always identified so pupils are gradually beginning to understand the ways in which the messages of the Gospel can influence our actions. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of the way in which creative prayer has been established in all classes and is part of the weekly cycle of prayer and liturgy opportunities that are on offer. Pupils do not always fully reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy or articulate the ways in which they have responded, and have been inspired to act, giving concrete examples.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school and forms part of routine gatherings of pupils and staff. There is a daily pattern of prayer which offers all in the community a range of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. Pupils in EYFS were involved in planning high-quality acts of collective worship relevant to their age and ability, establishing strong foundations for the development of pupil-led worship as they progress through the school. It is evident that staff work well with families to include them in the prayer life of the school. Parents commented on the sense of community and togetherness and discussed how much they value the key messages shared during prayer times. The school works very effectively with the local parish to help pupils to engage more fully in liturgies. The parish Deacon was very supportive of the close links and liaison with the school, and staff spoke highly

about how welcomed they feel at weekly parish Masses. A class liturgy on 'Significance' demonstrated how relevant staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead well-constructed prayer. Pupils reflected spiritually on how, 'The little things we do can make a big difference.'

In a short space of time, school leaders have planned and embedded a varied programme of prayer and liturgy. The subject lead has assisted others well, offering high quality professional development opportunities. As a result, staff and pupils are able to provide acts of prayer and liturgy that are engaging, accessible and relevant to pupils. Staff commented highly upon the creative prayer training which was modelled by the subject lead once a week for a full term. Staff felt empowered by this liturgical formation which has transformed the ways in which staff plan and lead prayer and liturgy. As a result, all staff understand the centrality of prayer to the life of the school, with a staff member commenting that, 'Prayer in all forms is a strength of the school, the subject lead is a great ambassador and we have all deepened our understanding.' Governors have noted the additional confidence staff have gained in the meaning and purpose of prayer and spoke highly of the ways in which leaders engaged the whole community during a reflection on the Stations of the Cross in Lent. The voice of pupils, parents and staff are a valued part of the school's evaluation cycle.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148283
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9293732
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, NE22 6EQ
School phone number	01670822389
Headteacher	Laura Fallon
Chair of Local Governing Body	Christine Mills
School Website	www.st-bedes.northumberland.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Claire Garbutt
Sonia Fraser

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