



St Bede's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148779

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

05–06 November 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

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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- St Bede's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School has responded fully to the areas of improvement identified during the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Pupils know that their uniqueness is celebrated and they recognise that they are valued. They are therefore confident and extremely proud members of the community.
- Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils and their families, as well as staff. Consequently, pupils know they are safe and deeply loved, and staff feel very well cared for and supported. Parents are highly appreciative of the high level of commitment shown by leaders to support them as their child's first educator.
- The school environment promotes the dignity of all members of the school community and celebrates its Catholic character.
- Systematic opportunities in religious education lessons to reflect on prior learning and understand key religious vocabulary ensure that pupils develop religious literacy. This ensures that pupils know and remember more over time.
- Pupils confidently and enthusiastically plan, lead and evaluate celebrations of the word which link to the liturgical year or appropriate themes and have scripture at the heart.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed the principles of Catholic social teaching so that pupils have a deep understanding of the theology that underpins their life choices and actions.
- Ensure that religious education lessons are well-paced to maximise progress in learning.
- Provide a variety of creative prayer opportunities which are systematically planned, to enrich prayer and liturgy experiences for all.

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

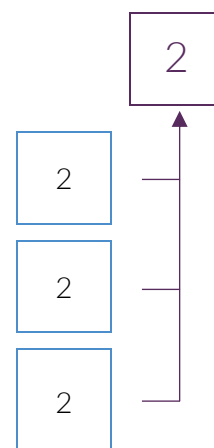
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



The pupils at St Bede's Catholic Primary School are proud to be members of their school's community and, as one pupil remarked, 'It feels special to be part of this school.' Pupils know and understand the school's mission statement, 'Inspired by Jesus to care, to serve, to do our best' because it is shared in all aspects of school life. They recognise the distinctive Catholic character of the school and can say how this helps them to grow and become, 'responsible to care for others and be respectful'. They know they are loved, and consequently, they feel secure and valued. They recognise that they are unique and because there are explicit opportunities to explore the beliefs and cultures of others, pupils are respectful to all. Pupils enjoy leadership responsibilities, with one year 6 pupil reflecting, 'We realise that we have to help others; it's not all about us.' Their behaviour is excellent and they are supported so that they can manage their emotions and develop self-discipline. Pupils have been introduced to the concepts of Catholic social teaching; however, because the principles are not fully embedded across the wider curriculum, pupils cannot fully articulate the theology that underlies and inspires their actions and choices.

Staff are generous in the way they welcome and serve pupils and their families, with notable regard for the most vulnerable. One parent commented, 'Staff have supported our family through very difficult times. They have shown compassion and concern... they have shown Christian values.' Staff are committed to embracing the Catholic charism of the school and are embedding the St Bede's Way to enable pupils to live out the school's mission statement day to day, and as a foundation for their future lives. One parent explained that at home, 'My children do things in the St Bede's Way which makes me happy and proud.' Staff provide pastoral care which ensures that all pupils are valued, and parents recognise that staff sustain an ethos that

is nurturing and encouraging because their actions are Christ-centred. Staff create displays which celebrate the mission of the school, ensuring that the environment acclaims every member of the school family. Consequently, pupils thrive in an inspiring and happy community. Staff are highly supportive of one another and are positive role models. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is embedded in the teachings of the Catholic Church and pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned.

Leaders have enthusiastically developed the St Bede's Way which supports the mission of the school. In light of the changing demographic of the community, and after careful monitoring, leaders have reviewed the mission statement to ensure that it is at the heart of the school, impacting positively on the Catholic character. Leaders seek to meet the needs of families in the school community, providing financial support and uniform exchanges to ensure their school is inclusive. Leaders are witnesses to the Gospel in the decisions they make. They recognise the responsibility to serve others, and they are successful in sustaining relationships with families which build trust. One parent expressed their gratitude for the headteacher, 'for how much they do... in teaching our children about Catholic life.' After monitoring provision, leaders and governors allocate resources effectively to enhance the Catholic character of the school, creating a nurturing environment where pupils thrive. Leaders are committed to engaging with the parish for sacramental preparation and worship, and this is valued by the community. Governors are regular visitors to school, and they are therefore able to make informed decisions which ensure that policies and procedures are rooted in Christian love. They pay high regard to the well-being of staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

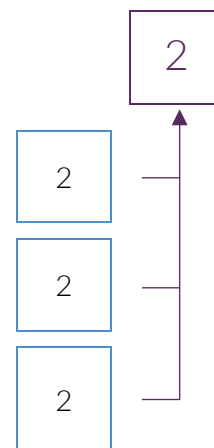
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 consistent progress from their individual starting points in religious education because they engage well and try hard in lessons. They are motivated to learn, with one pupil commenting, 'Lessons can inspire us.' They are able to recall prior learning and discuss concepts with clarity. Consequently, most pupils work within the expectations of the planned curriculum, in line with the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory, 2012*. Pupils can reflect on their learning to understand the demands of religious commitment for believers and then use their knowledge to reflect ethically, as is appropriate to their age. Because lessons are adapted, pupils access the curriculum and develop religious literacy. They enjoy lessons and are eager to share their knowledge. They concentrate well and demonstrate an understanding of key concepts, making individual responses with some independence and using relevant religious vocabulary. They are keen to progress and respond positively to feedback given in lessons to improve their work. They develop their knowledge and understanding because of their positive attitudes to learning and their eagerness to respond even when they find concepts difficult. They produce work which is well-presented and comparable to standards in other subjects, reflecting pride in their achievements.

Teachers prioritise the teaching of religious education, deepening their own subject knowledge and understanding of key religious concepts to deliver the planned curriculum with academic rigour. They work collaboratively to plan sequential lessons that build upon the prior learning of their pupils, ensuring progression across the curriculum. Teachers adapt their teaching styles and explanations when necessary, so that their pupils build understanding and develop religious literacy appropriate to their age. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to explore and compare a range of sources in depth. Teachers use questions to provoke deeper thinking and support pupils to reflect on how religious understanding influences the actions of believers.

Teachers inform parents of the curriculum content, and this is valued and supports engagement at home. Staff encourage pupils and praise successes so that almost all pupils are motivated and engage well. They develop and adapt varied tasks, including art and drama, so that almost all pupils can express their learning in ways which capture their understanding effectively. However, the pace of some lessons is slow and consequently there are missed opportunities to move learning forward.

Leaders and governors prioritise the provision of religious education, and consequently there is parity in standards to other core subjects. They ensure that lessons are well resourced and they plan some enrichment opportunities which impact positively on the engagement of pupils. Leaders monitor provision and therefore make informed decisions that lead to strategic action. This has resulted in improving provision for religious education over time. In response to recent monitoring, leaders have implemented a 'thoughts, feelings and next steps' approach to help pupils to reflect on their learning. However, this is not consistently embedded across the school and therefore the impact is varied. Governors are actively involved in monitoring and are therefore well informed and confident to deliberate with leaders, so that improvement plans are relevant. Leaders provide professional development for staff which promotes improving outcomes in religious education and secures accurate assessment. They plan opportunities for teachers and pupils to share best practice with partner Catholic schools. The subject leader has a vision to build and embed improving outcomes. She acts as a role model in supporting teachers to develop their pedagogical skills and to prepare sequential lessons, and she has played a valuable role in developing new diocesan resources.

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 understand that prayer is their opportunity to communicate with God, including through traditional Catholic prayers and spontaneous prayer. Working collaboratively and supported by adults, they are able to plan and lead celebrations of the word with increasing confidence, sometimes using what they have learned in the religious education curriculum to inform their plans. One pupil remarked, 'We use scripture to show us, step by step, how we can follow in the footsteps of Jesus.' Pupils proudly undertake ministries and Religious Education Ambassadors eagerly promote the prayer life of the school by, for example, praying the rosary and reading Gospel stories with younger pupils. Pupils join in community prayer and hymn singing readily. They can describe the liturgical year and how prayer expressions change according to the liturgical season. They know that prayer and liturgy is central to the life of the school. Many pupils can explain how prayer shapes their thinking and inspires their actions, and this is valued by parents. One parent shared how the prayer life of the school has impacted on the evangelisation of their family. 'My daughters are teaching me... we are now looking to join the local parish, and I am looking forward to going on this journey with them.'

Planned prayer forms the rhythm of the day across St Bede's, and staff ensure that pupils understand that prayer can provide comfort and inspiration. They regularly model good practice in the way they support pupils to plan and lead celebrations of the word. They skilfully enable pupils to reflect on celebrations, so that pupils can effectively evaluate the impact of prayer experiences. Staff authentically encourage pupils, and this results in pupils engaging joyously and ministering with enthusiasm. Staff create an environment which is conducive to prayer, using music and art to promote reverence. They develop prayer spaces in classrooms which are reflective and stimulating. They also familiarise pupils with traditional prayers, the Examen and Lectio Divina. Scripture is central to prayer experiences and therefore pupils are encouraged to

be inspired by the teachings of Jesus in their everyday lives. One pupil reflected, 'My mission this week is to know that I can be a saint by following Jesus' ways.' Staff work enthusiastically with parents to ensure they feel welcomed and involved in prayer and liturgy both in school and church. One parent commented, 'I am grateful for... many opportunities we are given to celebrate and worship with our children.'

Leaders have developed a policy which reflects the demands of the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory, 2023*. They have a planned programme of prayer and liturgy which links to the liturgical year; however, the provision for more varied, creative prayer is not systematically planned as part of the regular provision. Leaders work closely with the parish to ensure that pupils attend and minister at weekly parish Masses, and parishioners recognise that this enriches the celebrations because pupils are 'lively and happy.' Staff and pupils understand the importance of prayer because leaders prioritise the prayer experiences offered by the school. They provide relevant training which supports teachers to understand how to effectively lead prayer and liturgy. It also builds their confidence in helping pupils to lead celebrations of the word. Leaders ensure that resources are used to enhance prayer spaces, including Lenten prayer stations, so that pupils are inspired. Leaders and governors regularly monitor the impact of provision, and include pupils in the evaluation, so that relevant strategic priorities are identified. Leaders ensure that parents and parishioners are welcomed to pray with pupils, both in school and church, and all members of the community highly value this.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148779
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3933315
Full postal address of the school	Harold Street, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, NE32 3AJ
School phone number	01914898218
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Mark Hurst
Chair of local governing committee	Paul McAlindon
School Website	www.stbedesjarrow.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell
Kirsty Evans

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

