



St Bede's Catholic Primary School Washington

URN: 147138

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

12–13 March 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 in relation to curriculum time dedicated to the teaching of religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with all the requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School has responded to and met the areas for further development which were identified within the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Staff and pupil relationships at St Bede's Catholic Primary School show a strong sense of belonging. This is evident by the high levels of care and concern they show for each other.
- Staff at St Bede's Catholic Primary School are committed to providing a supportive pastoral care programme for all pupils, this is well developed and valued by the school community.
- Pupils' behaviour at St Bede's Catholic Primary School is very good both in lessons and in interactions around school, this is a real strength of the pupils. They are happy to be part of the school community and keen to learn and develop.
- Pupils religious literacy is also a strength, enabling learners to demonstrate a good understanding of the religious education curriculum and produce work of a high standard.
- Staff, pupils and parental engagement within the parish is evident through their regular participation in Mass, building on the strength of the community.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders are involved and play an integral part in the school's self-evaluation and analysis of Catholic life and mission.
- Consistently provide pupils with relevant and specific feedback in their learning to help them to understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning.
- Provide pupils regular opportunities to work independently to plan and lead class prayer.

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

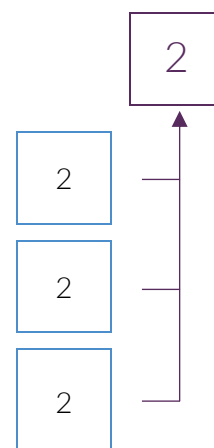
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 are aware of the distinctive nature and mission of St Bede's Catholic Primary School. They use their school motto 'In Christ's kindness we learn, we pray, we belong' and can confidently explain what the motto means to them. They are happy, confident pupils, secure in the knowledge that they are cared for and loved. The interactions between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, demonstrate that pupils of all ages enjoy school and feel a sense of belonging to the school community. One pupil stated, 'Everyone is part of St Bede's ...it is okay to be different ...we belong with God as one family.' There is evidence of the development of Catholic social teaching and an awareness of caring for the common good. Pupils throughout the school talk about the involvement in the local initiative Keep Washington Clean litter pick, working with Cafod, for example the Big Lent Walk, and their engagement with the parish community highlighted that there is a well-developed sense of respect for everyone. Behaviour around the school, inside the school building is good, showing a genuine and embedded sense of unity throughout the school. In most classes, behaviour for learning was strong, pupils were engaged and keen to participate. This is not yet consistent across all year groups.

The school environment is welcoming and embraces its Catholic identity, this is evidenced through the variety of displays and focal points around school. The school's motto, which is a clear expression of the educational mission of the Church, is displayed throughout school, it is known and used as part of prayerful gatherings. There is a strong sense of community, expressed by various stakeholders. Parents stated, 'Teachers are approachable and supportive.' A Year 4 pupil said, 'Our school is about being kind and belonging together as a group.' A staff member stated, 'Children, staff and parents are one community...it is a wonderful place to work...

staff do not want to leave.' As a result, there is a real culture of welcome, valuing and supporting pupils of other faiths. The pastoral support is well-led, pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about anything and mechanisms are in place to provide support, including the development of a nurture club. In addition to this, the staff engage with Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust's (BWCET) developed curriculum, which is linked to Catholic social teaching. Relationships and health education is compliant and follows Diocesan guidance and parents are consulted regarding the curriculum.

The headteacher and religious education subject leader can articulate their understanding of the Church's mission, viewing it as one of their core leadership responsibilities. School leaders and governors recognise that Catholic schools are at the service of the Church and seek to work closely with the parish of St Bede's. The parish priest stated, 'Catholic character is lived out well by all staff.' Leaders work in partnership with the Bishop and Diocese, responding to Diocesan policies and initiatives. The school seeks to engage parents in various ways to build relationships to support their pupils. Leaders are aware of their school community and practically ensure that resources are used effectively to support those in need, both materially and educationally. The community is involved with projects to support the Church's preferential option for the poor, such as the Shoe Box Appeal and Cafod's Big Lent Walk. Leaders are aware of the importance of professional development for all staff. The recently appointed Early Careers Teacher described feeling well supported by his mentor, the religious education leader, and senior leaders during his recent induction. The impact of leaders' monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission is developing.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

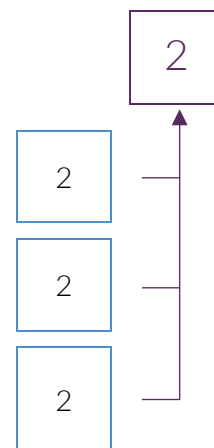
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupil outcomes in religious education lessons are a strength of the school. Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum required by the *Religious Education curriculum Directory*. Books are well presented, demonstrating that all pupils, including disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are making good progress in knowing more and remembering more. This was evidenced in Key Stage 2 where pupils were confidently able to recall parts of the Mass. This is further evidenced through high levels of religious literacy, pupils confidently use religious vocabulary within lessons and when answering questions about religious education. The majority of pupils are confident in their religious knowledge and can talk enthusiastically about their learning, this is particularly evident in upper Key Stage 2. Pupils showed good knowledge to recall and answer questions linked to their prior learning. Older pupils show some understanding of how to respond to teacher feedback requiring them to answer extension questions, sometimes requiring them to think more deeply. In most lessons, behaviour for learning showed pupils as active learners, engaging enthusiastically with curiosity and interest, working confidently within lessons. One pupil stated, 'I really like religious lessons because we have reflective moments to think about Jesus.' Pupils' attainment demonstrates that outcomes show parity with other core curriculum subjects.

The vast majority of teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, demonstrating good understanding of both the religious education curriculum and how pupils learn. As a result, most staff are able to articulate and clearly share this knowledge, thus improving learning opportunities for pupils. The curriculum follows the *Come and See* programme and lessons are well-structured and sequenced. There is some evidence of adaptive teaching and scaffolding, particularly within the work of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In

some classes, teachers used questioning to elicit information from the pupils and extend learning. Pupils work is marked following the marking policy, in full parity to other core curriculum subjects. There are some examples of stickers and positive comments, acknowledging good outcomes, and in some cases, questions written in feedback to clarify or extend pupils understanding. Religious education is not yet outstanding because this practice is not embedded and applied consistently across all classes. Teachers plan a variety of tasks, including the use of scripture, music and images, showing evidence of creativity in task design, supporting levels of pupil engagement. Most adults are deployed effectively to support pupils, optimising learning opportunities.

School leaders ensure that the curriculum follows the guidance laid out in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Religious education is given full parity to other core subjects, this is evidenced through timetabling, resourcing and through the quantity of work within the pupils' religious education books. Leaders are aware of, and engage with, professional development opportunities within the Diocese and BWCET. They support staff to develop their own knowledge and understanding through access to training both in-house and at Diocesan level. Less experienced staff described good levels of support from the subject leader. The headteacher and religious education subject leader have a clear vision for religious education teaching and learning outcomes. They understand the importance of the curriculum and its impact on the lives of the pupils. The work within the pupils' books demonstrates high expectations from staff and high levels of engagement from pupils in response. Observations of religious education lessons, by school leaders and the link religious education governor, is built into the whole school cycle for monitoring and evaluation. There is a clear format for feedback to staff to enable action to be taken to move teaching and learning forward.

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 at St Bede's respond well to the prayerful opportunities and liturgy provided to them by the school. They are keen to participate and engage readily through reflecting in silence, joining in collective prayer and singing joyfully, pupils are enthusiastic and participate readily in signing actions linked to the songs. Pupils understand the Church's liturgical year. They can talk about the liturgical colours of cloths and relevant symbols and artefacts used appropriate to season. Pupils understand some of the different ways of praying and have experience of praying the rosary, teaspoon prayers and more formal ways to pray such as Mass. There is some evidence of pupils planning end of unit celebrations of the word with the support of staff. There is evidence of some pupils engaging in liturgical ministries, including altar servers in the Parish Mass. Older pupils demonstrate some understanding of how prayer influences wider life, for example pupils praying for others in rosary, dedicating the prayers to those in need both in the community and in the wider world.

Prayer is a regular part of the school day at St Bede's, with a pattern of prayers punctuating the day, including the school prayer which was written by the community. Whole school celebration of the word is shared at the start of each week and is delivered by leaders who model good practice, acting as role models to staff and pupils in relation to liturgy. Older pupils are involved in the weekly gathering and read prayers confidently. Relevant scripture, linked to the Church's year, are a central part of prayer opportunities both in the whole school setting and in class liturgies. Music and singing are used to enhance prayerful gatherings. . There is some variety in the prayer and liturgy opportunities offered, these include whole school occasions such as weekly Mass in the parish, attended by two classes each week, end of topic pupil led liturgy, teaspoon prayers and opportunities to pray the rosary in the older classes. Prayer spaces are evident throughout school, from displays around the building reflecting the Catholic identity to

the liturgically themed prayer focus created in each classroom. There are also two dedicated prayer spaces outside, including a prayer garden which incorporates artwork created by the whole school community. Pupils value these spaces and talk of using them during their liturgy time.

The school's policy for prayer and worship is well formulated. Leaders have a vision for prayer and liturgy and have worked closely with the local parish to build strong links and active engagement in weekly worship. As a result, two classes attend Mass weekly, the parish priest states that this has greatly enhanced engagement of families within the parish, and he has seen an increase in pupils attending Mass with their families and engaging in activities such as children's liturgy and ministries such as altar servers. Holy days of obligation and feast days, including the feast day of St Bede are observed. The school seeks to engage parents through prayer opportunities such as invitations to end of topic liturgies, weekly parish Masses and involvement with home-school activities such as the Travelling Advent Candle. Leaders understand the different levels of skill and participation, in view of this school leaders have developed prayer templates and Mass guidance for different year groups showing progressive involvement and expectations. Leaders are aware of professional development opportunities with the Diocese and BWCET are linked to prayer and liturgy. Monitoring and evaluation are built into the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle. The newly appointed chair of governors is keen to engage with this as she embarks on her new role.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147138
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3943329
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Hampshire Place, Usworth, Washington, NE37 2NP
School phone number	01914165858
Headteacher	Jonathan Anderson
Chair of local governing body	Karen Addison
School Website	stbedeswashington.bwcet.com
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Wilkinson 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	January 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

Leigh-anne Young
Lisa Hoey

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