



St Bede's RC Primary School

Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EQ

School Unique Reference Number: **122308**

Inspection dates: 21 – 22 April 2016
Lead inspector: Barbara Simpson

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Bede's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make valuable contributions to the Catholic Life and take part enthusiastically in activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and the wider community.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas of improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is continuing to ensure that all pupils make good progress because of good teaching and assessment.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Prayer is central to the life of the school. It is a key part of school celebrations and pupils from a very young age are reverent and respectful during worship.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers, including governors have not yet established systems to evaluate and monitor the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils across the school are not yet skilled in planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of forms.
- In Religious Education there are inconsistencies in the quality of subject knowledge amongst teachers across the school.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Bede's is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in the former mining town of Bedlington.
- Pupils are taught in eight single year-group classes from nursery to year six.
- The school has had a lot of changes in governance and staffing over the last two years.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is about average.
- The school has a low percentage (36%) of Catholic teachers and of teachers with Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (18%).

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of the Catholic Life of the school by:
 - Improving the skills of leaders and managers, including governors, in establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems for Catholic Life.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Offering more opportunities for pupil involvement in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship independently throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education by
 - Improving the quality and depth of teachers' subject knowledge.
 - Ensuring that the best practice in marking and feedback is implemented across the school.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- 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.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- Pupils appreciate the community to which they belong. They understand that their school teaches good behaviour and they can clearly articulate how to be good friends, to include children who may be feeling lonely and to welcome new pupils to the school. Therefore behaviour is good and pupils are caring and considerate towards each other.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong. They understand the importance of forgiving and being forgiven.
- Mini Vinnies, buddies and school council members take a lead in enhancing the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils talk with maturity of the need to not only look after each other in school, but to respond to wider global issues. They demonstrate a sense of pride when discussing their support of charities, such as CAFOD and the Matthew Project.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of their school Vision Statement – ‘St Bede’s is a community of faith, love and respect...’ and know that they had a part in developing it. As a result they enter wholeheartedly into a range of activities which promote and support the school’s ethos.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key liturgical celebrations throughout the year and have some involvement in parish and diocesan activities and celebrations.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- The mission statement is a living document and is lived out in the high expectations demonstrated by staff and governors. Parents talk about the school’s mission statement being ‘all around us’.
- St Bede’s is a calm and cohesive school with a shared vision and a great desire to foster positive relationships with the parish and the wider community through projects such as the travelling cross and travelling crib and the use of Twitter to communicate with parents.
- The learning environment clearly reflects the school’s Catholic identity. The wide range of displays and focal points remind pupils, parents and visitors of the school’s mission and the focus for the current themes.
- The school provides a high level of pastoral care to pupils and there is a commitment to the

most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.

- The school is also mindful of the pastoral needs of staff and works hard to meet them.
- The school's behaviour policy is written in the light of Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic church and its demands are regularly communicated to pupils and to parents and carers.
- Personal, social and health education is taught through a variety of subject areas, although no specific programme is used. The relationship and sex education programme has recently been revised and reflects the teachings of the Catholic church.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- Leaders and managers, including governors are clearly committed to the mission of the church and are well regarded by staff as models of Catholic leadership.
- A quite recent thorough review of the mission and vision statements included all pupils and stakeholders to ensure that everyone was involved in its formation. As a consequence pupils are able to articulate the school's distinctive vision and to explain what it means for the life of the school and for them.
- Although provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given high priority by leaders, it is not yet included in the school's self-evaluation cycle and a range of systematic monitoring activities are not yet in place for Catholic Life.
- Governors are influential in determining the direction of the school but are not yet fully involved in evaluating Catholic Life.
- The governing body communicates high expectations of the Catholic Life of the school, however it is not yet referred to explicitly as a school improvement priority.
- The school works well with parents and carers, including those who are harder to reach. Consequently most parents have a good grasp of the school's mission and are supportive of it.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- St Bede's is a prayerful community. Collective Worship engages the interest of all the pupils and they respond with confidence. Pupils told the inspector that they like Collective Worship and are keen to be chosen to have an active part.
- All pupils from nursery to year six participate with reverence and respect; joining in prayers with confidence and singing with enthusiasm.
- Pupils know what constitutes the various elements of Collective Worship and are able to prepare and lead class worship with increasing confidence. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to plan and lead worship independently in a range of contexts and some teachers do not have the confidence to stand back and allow the pupils to do so.
- Most pupils, from the very youngest, have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts, for example, some pupils in reception class were able to tell the inspector why there were gold and white cloths on the class prayer table.
- Pupils respectfully talk about other world faiths and children of other faiths are included in the prayer life of the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and parish Masses and relish having a part to play in them.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Prayer is central to the life of St Bede's and this is apparent when you enter the school as the entrance reflects the school as a place of worship.
- Opportunities for prayer are provided for the staff each morning before school, contributing to and strengthening the sense of community.
- Pupils are given many opportunities for prayer in different forms and settings throughout the week. They particularly respond well to the class prayer books which they contribute to by adding their own personal prayers.
- There are clear guidelines for Collective Worship and a timetable for whole school liturgies which are regular and inclusive. Themes are based on the liturgical calendar, Sunday gospels and current topics. However, regular class-based worship is not timetabled and its frequency is inconsistent, therefore pupils are not acquiring skills of planning and leading Collective Worship progressively across the school.
- Families are involved in pupils' religious development through the use of 'travelling cribs',

'travelling crosses', class prayer books and the school's Twitter feed.

- Parents greatly value and enjoy taking part in whole school liturgies and Masses and attendance is good. They speak of finding such celebrations moving. Leaders are always looking for ways to encourage more families to take part.
- Acts of Collective Worship are well resourced and planned using diocesan guidelines, although there was very little evidence of liturgical music.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is good.

- The headteacher and senior leaders are enthusiastic and know how to plan and deliver good quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a deeply rooted understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and ensure that displays and artefacts around the school reflect this.
- Leaders are keen to continually improve the quality of provision of Collective Worship in all its forms, offering staff professional development opportunities provided by the diocese and the local Catholic cluster of schools. These opportunities are enthusiastically taken up by staff. However, Collective Worship is not yet part of the formal professional development cycle for staff.
- Leaders model good practice for all members of staff through class and whole school liturgies and Masses. They provide clear guidelines so that staff understand that expectations are high. They lead the school community in showing how Collective Worship can inspire their daily lives.
- Leaders seek the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils about Collective Worship, but as yet do not have a system to use these views to improve practice.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school, taking part in Collective Worship, however they are not yet involved in its evaluation through the school's self-evaluation process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and can explain its value. They understand that it is a core subject and are keen to do well. They work hard during lessons and behaviour for learning is excellent.
- Pupils spontaneously use a variety of religious vocabulary and are able to make links between their own lives and experiences and the life of Jesus. Pupils said that they particularly enjoyed learning about bible stories and about other religions, mentioning Islam and Judaism.
- Pupils in most classes acquire knowledge quickly and are able to identify links with previous learning. They are developing well in their knowledge and understanding, as well as in their ability to reflect on meaning and are able to consider the impact of religious ideas on their lives.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, make good progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time, given their starting points. Pupils' books evidence a good standard and quantity of work across the school.
- Pupils have an understanding of how they have done and how to improve, although most are not aware of the levels of attainment achieved in a piece of work.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teaching is mainly good. In the best lessons pupils are set differentiated tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which successfully engage all pupils. Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement, as a result pupils concentrate well.
- Teachers faithfully use diocesan and school plans and guidance to good effect and some have good subject knowledge, but this is not consistent across the school, occasionally leading to evidence of confusion in pupils' work books.
- The school has a good range of resources and strategies to promote learning and teachers usually use time well. Lessons observed during the inspection included effective use of information and communications technology, paired, individual and group work. However,

occasionally teaching loses sight of the learning objective and therefore the pace of learning slows.

- Additional adult support is sometimes used well, ensuring good progress for most pupils, but this is not consistent across the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- Marking and feedback are carried out regularly, but not consistently across the school. In some classes insufficient direction is given to pupils and teachers need to provide tighter improvement prompts and guidance as to the next steps in their learning. In some classes pupils also require further opportunities to respond to teacher comments in order to enhance learning. Most pupils are increasingly using self-evaluation to good effect.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- Senior leaders are committed, knowledgeable, and well informed about current developments in Religious Education.
- Leaders ensure that their vision for Religious Education is shared through staff meetings, briefings and staff attendance at diocesan training events. As a result Religious Education has a high profile in the school and is well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- Religious Education compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resources and time; although a minority of staff are Catholic and only the senior leaders have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Through a range of systematic and rigorous monitoring activities, including lesson observation, work scrutiny and moderation, leaders have an accurate picture of achievement.
- Robust tracking and analysis provide a firm basis for diagnosing strengths and areas for development. Planning for improvement is therefore based upon sound evidence and data, making the school well placed to further improve and support teaching.
- Governors are beginning to hold leaders to account for performance in Religious Education and to be more closely involved in monitoring activities, however Religious Education does not yet feature in the performance management cycle.
- Pupils have access to good quality sacramental preparation led by a team of parish catechists in partnership with the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

2

CATHOLIC LIFE:

2

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

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

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Bede's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	122308
Local authority	Northumberland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Mrs Joan Riley
Head teacher	Mr Damian Groark
Date of previous school inspection	September 2012
Telephone number	01670 822389
Email address	3732admin@northumberland.sch.uk