

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: St Bede's RC Primary School

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School URN: 122308

Headteacher: Mr Con Todd (Executive Head)
Miss Kate Horn (Head of School)

Chair of Governors: Mrs Joanne Riley (Chair of IEB)

Lead Inspector: Miss Maria Elliott

Date of Inspection 25 and 26 September 2012

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Bede's is an average sized Catholic Primary school situated in the former mining town of Bedlington in Northumberland. Following Northumberland's reorganisation programme the school changed its status to that of a primary school from September 2010.

It is currently in a soft federation with St Benet Biscop Catholic High School on the same site. The headteacher of the high school is the executive headteacher of the primary school. The school is managed on a day-to-day basis by a head of school in partnership with the executive headteacher. Governance is through the Interim Executive Board (IEB) supported by a shadow governing body.

The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below the national average.

The current senior leadership model has been in place for less than a year, following a period of extensive staff turbulence; with many long and short-term supply teachers. Until June 2012 the school required special measures.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	230
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	61%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	22%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	2%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	15%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	13%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	7%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	9
Part time teachers:	1
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	50%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	22%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10%
Year 1	10%
Year 2	10%
Year 3	10%
Year 4	10%
Year 5	10%
Year 6	10%

Parishes served by the school

INSPECTION JUDGMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

3

CATHOLIC LIFE

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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KEY FINDINGS

- St Bede's is a warm welcoming school that has seen some turbulence over recent years. While there is evidence that the school is now moving forward at a brisk pace, progress has yet to be fully embedded, therefore the quality of Catholic Education still requires improvement. The school is becoming more effective in promoting both Catholic Life and Religious Education. The new leadership team, staff and IEB are striving to ensure the school's Catholic Mission shines through all that they do and permeates all aspects of school life enabling the pupil's spiritual and moral development to flourish.
- The quality of the Catholic Life of the school requires improvement. Since September 2012 the profile of Catholic Life has been given greater emphasis, though it is still more peripheral than it should be in a Catholic school. As a result pupils are not yet confident in articulating how they contribute to and benefit from the provision made for the Catholic Life. The newly formed leadership team, with the full support of the IEB, have very clear plans in place to ensure Catholic Life is at the heart of the school, but at present pupils have a rather superficial understanding of its place and purpose.
- The quality of Collective Worship requires improvement. At present Collective Worship is fairly routine and safe following a narrow structure; it does not take into account opportunities to develop pupils' liturgical formation. Pupil participation is rather passive. However, plans are in place to develop pupils' leadership skills in order to enable them to plan and lead Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes little accommodation for the faith background of pupils of different religions. The school has been very proactive in seeking out support and expertise to improve the quality of Collective Worship, but as yet this has not been fully embedded within school.
- The quality of Religious Education requires improvement. Teaching is not consistently good across school due to inconsistencies in planning, differentiation, marking and feedback. As a result attainment is low. Teacher assessment is in its infancy in terms of its accuracy and is not always used to plan future learning. The new coordinator, and the leadership team have a strategic approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of Religious Education in order to track progress and

raise attainment but as yet this has had little impact on pupil outcomes.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Improve the quality of Catholic Life by:
 - ensuring that the distinctive Catholic nature of the school is clearly articulated, promoted and celebrated in all school development planning, communications and documentation that the school creates and its impact monitored and evaluated;
 - ensuring pupils are actively involved in shaping the school’s mission, contributing to it in a planned way and are instrumental in planning improvements.

- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship;
 - ensuring that the faith backgrounds of all pupils are celebrated and included into the rhythm of the school’s planned worship, and those pupils with different faith beliefs are fully supported.

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - ensuring that all teachers accurately assess learning and this assessment information is used to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils’ learning;
 - ensuring that teachers’ marking and feedback provides information to enable pupils to improve their work.

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 quality of Catholic Life within St Bede's requires improvement, but recently the school has begun to place higher priority on developing the Catholic Life of the school to ensure the pupils both contribute to and benefit from it. Most pupils have a sense of belonging to the school community. They participate in school activities and, through the introduction of the 'Pupil Council', are beginning to take responsibility and influence the Catholic Life of the school in some way. They engage in activities the school organises to raise funds to address the needs of others, but have a limited understanding of the reasons for doing this. The pupils are responsive to the opportunities the school provides for their personal development and as a result are mostly secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth. Due to the school actions to raise the profile of Catholic Life within the school the pupils are beginning to become more able to identify the religious aspects of their school and they have a developing knowledge of the religious practice in the parish.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school requires improvement. Recently the provision for the Catholic Life of the school has been given higher priority, and is now seen as a core subject. The school mission statement is a clear expression of the educational mission of the church and is very visible throughout the school. It is known and understood by most pupils and beginning to be lived out by all within school. Generally good relationships exist between staff and pupils. Throughout the school environment all displays in the public corridors are linked to ensuring the Catholic identity of the school is promoted, however this is often at the detriment of other curriculum subjects and religious beliefs. However, this Catholic identity has yet to permeate to key documentation and communication. The school provides pastoral care to all pupils. There are programmes in place for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE); by using the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). Chaplaincy is emerging, through regular visits from the parish priest and recently through the support of the chaplaincy team from the high school. This as yet has not impacted upon the school. The school has high expectations of behaviour but this as yet has not fully impacted upon the inconsistencies in pupils' behaviour throughout school.

The promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school by leaders and managers requires improvement. Leadership within the school is still in its infancy, but all leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission of the Church. The Head of School, Executive Headteacher and the IEB have worked tirelessly to ensure St Bede's has an authentic Catholic ethos and a clear direction. They have readily sought out guidance and support from the diocese as well as beginning to work in partnership with another Catholic primary school within the local cluster. The high expectations of the school leaders regarding the Catholic Life of the school are beginning to be consistently communicated to all stakeholders. Through accurate self-evaluation the school has a very clear and detailed picture of its strengths and areas for development in respect of the Catholic character and a comprehensive RE Action Plan provides a firm basis to drive improvement forward; but as yet this has not had time to be fully embedded within school, consequently the pupils and staff have a rather superficial response to the Catholic Life of the school. Through open and honest dialogue, the school parents and carers now have a good grasp of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. The IEB has the expertise to meet the school's needs and are now committed to ensuring they develop the Catholic Life of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' 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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The pupils response to and participation in the schools Collective Worship requires improvement. Most pupils take part in the regular prayer life of the school, they act with reverence and are becoming more empowered to participate. They sing enthusiastically, are reflective and pray quietly. Pupils are not yet skilled in their ability to plan and prepare acts of worship and have a limited sense of what constitutes an act of worship. The pupils understanding of the religious seasons and feasts is evolving, but at times they articulate a rather confused sense of the liturgical year and scripture; with only some pupils, for example, having the understanding that gospel readings and bible readings are two separate things. Since September 2012, the school introduced 'Statements to Live By' into Collective Worship and these are beginning to give the pupils an understanding of how they can be put into practice to make them a better person. Pupils have an emerging awareness of the existence of difference, but a limited understanding of the need to accommodate it. However, pupils are never disrespectful towards others of different beliefs. Their ability to understand the effect the school's prayer life has on them is emerging. Pupils participate keenly in the school's Sacramental Preparation programme.

The provision for Collective Worship requires improvement. Acts of Collective Worship are becoming more central to the life of the school, and have a higher profile than in recent years. The school is beginning to build up its resource base to ensure that worship has variety and is structured in a creative and imaginative way. However, at present it follows a fairly routine format which does not always maintain the pupil's engagement. Pupils are prepared for Collective Worship but in a manner that leads to rather passive responses. There are opportunities for parents and carers to attend school Masses in church as well as liturgies in school. A yearly plan for Collective Worship is now in place which follows the rhythm of the liturgical year. Senior staff are responsible for leading Collective Worship and they are beginning to develop an understanding of liturgical forms and varieties of worship styles and experiences to ensure the pupils have greater understanding of the Church's liturgical life. The parish priest also contributes to the planned provision by leading Collective Worship fortnightly. Themes are becoming more consistent with the Catholic character of the school, but not always responsive to the religious diversity among pupils. Pupils with different religious beliefs are not fully assisted or supported in their prayer rituals.

Leaders and managers have some understanding of how to plan and deliver Collective Worship, although, as yet they are not of high quality. They are developing their ability to speak about the church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites, gestures and symbols but as yet have not fully incorporated them into their delivery to develop the pupils liturgical formation. As a consequence, pupils' response to this provision requires improvement. However, the school has sought support from the Diocese and taken other opportunities to observe high quality Collective Worship in partnership schools. Liturgical and spiritual development has become part of the professional development cycle for all staff and this is beginning to impact upon their classroom practices. Senior leaders ensure that the pupils receive sacramental preparation in accordance with diocesan policy. Pupils are offered the opportunities to comment on Collective Worship and they are becoming more confident to state how they feel and systems are in place to extend these opportunities to parents and carers. Collective Worship is now reviewed as part of the whole school self-evaluation process and further developments form part of the school RE action plan which clearly outlines actions to improve the provision for Collective Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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Pupils enjoy Religious Education. Most pupils work steadily and show good levels of enthusiasm and interest. By upper key stage two (KS2) the pupils are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. When provided with the appropriate tasks and guidance the pupils work effectively, but inconsistencies in practice across the school results in pupils lacking in confidence in improving the quality of their work. Due to changes in school leadership in the past year, progress data is limited. However evidence of previous year progress is emerging. Pupils are beginning to acquire knowledge more quickly and are becoming more secure in their understanding. They are also beginning to develop skills appropriate to their age and ability. However inconsistencies in practice over recent years have resulted in the pupils not making the expected progress by the end of KS2, resulting in only a minority of pupils attaining the expected level. Most pupils in key stage one (KS1) are reaching an expected standard of attainment.

Due to inconsistencies in practice across the school, the quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education requires improvement. Where teaching is good, staff have a confident level of specialist expertise which they use well in both planning and teaching, and as a result they use an appropriate range of resources and teaching strategies to promote good learning. However, in most cases learning activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of the pupils. Focused staff training is enabling them to deliver sequences of lesson that enable the pupils to begin to identify connections between their study of religion and belief (AT1) and their exploration of the more personal reflection on issues of meaning and purpose (AT2). Teachers generally monitor pupils' work during lessons; where practice is good mini plenaries are used to pick up any misconceptions and adjust the planning accordingly, but this practice is not consistent across the school. Marking and feedback is beginning to be used so that pupils are informed of the progress they are making, but this at times is too infrequent and insufficiently focused to have any impact on the learning and progress. Through the recent introduction of 'I can' statements some pupils are becoming involved in assessing how well they are achieving. Teacher assessment is carried out by all staff, but on examination of the new portfolio, including work moderated by diocesan colleagues, staff judgements are not always accurate, especially in the higher levels.

The Religious Education coordinator has been in post for a short time, but is already beginning to make an impact. Pupil progress is now monitored in line with practices for other core subjects giving a clear picture of the major strengths and areas for development and this information is shared. Leaders are aware of current developments in Religious Education and are beginning to incorporate these within the newly developed practice of monitoring and evaluating provision. As a result, teaching is improving with some elements of good practice. Leaders have ensured Religious Education now has a more prominent profile in school and a shared common purpose regarding the teaching of Religious Education is emerging. However not all staff are confident in articulating this shared vision. As a result, it only has a superficial influence on the life of the school and on the moral and spiritual development of the pupils. The Religious Education curriculum is becoming more suitably matched to the pupils needs and interests and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school is actively developing links with other agencies, the local and wider community and especially the parish, although as yet the pupils have a limited understanding of how these activities enrich them as individuals. Greater emphasis has been given to ensure Religious Education is adequately resourced. Through a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation of the provision of Religious Education, the school is beginning to implement plans that are aimed at improving quality and provision, although as yet these have not had a sustained impact on outcomes.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

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CATHOLIC LIFE

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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 schools' 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

3

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

3

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

3

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

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	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Religious Education	3	3	3	3
Catholic Life	3	3	3	3
Collective Worship	3	3	3	3
	3	3	3	3