

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Bede's RC Primary

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School URN: 111688
Headteacher: Mrs Liz O'Hehir
Chair of Governors: Mrs Joan Edwards

Lead Inspector: Mrs Carole Snee
Date of Inspection 20 - 21 November 2012

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Bede's is an average sized Catholic primary school with a nursery, accommodating pupils aged 3 to 11 years of age. The number of pupils known to be eligible for Free School Meals is well above the national average. Since the previous inspection, there has been a number of staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. For the past three years, the school has been oversubscribed.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	212
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	27
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	54%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	25%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	21%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	17%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	12%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	8
Part time teachers:	3
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	82%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	45%

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
St Bede's , Stockton

INSPECTION JUDGMENTS

Overall Effectiveness	1
Catholic Life	1
Collective Worship	1
Religious Education	2
KEY FINDINGS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The overall quality of Catholic Education in St Bede's is outstanding. Although the quality of Religious Education is good, both the Catholic Life of the school and the Collective Worship are both outstanding.• Religious Education is good because pupils make good progress due to lively and interesting teaching. It is not yet outstanding because assessment needs to be used more rigorously in order to challenge all of the pupils, especially the more able.• The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because all staff are united in ensuring that pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure and are very proud of their religious identity.• Collective Worship at St Bede's is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Acts of worship engage the interests of all the pupils. Even the very youngest pupils are involved in planning and leading their own worship	

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Raise standards in Religious Education by:
 - Improving the marking and feedback to pupils, so that they are clear about what they have to do to improve their work;
 - Raising expectations for progress across the school, especially for the higher ability pupils, so that the pace of progress accelerates, and all pupils are challenged and supported appropriately.
- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation, and its impact on key strategies for improvement by:
 - Formalising a monitoring and evaluation programme for both Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school;
 - Ensuring that all evaluations include parents as well as pupils and staff;
 - Identifying precise focus areas for monitoring and ensuring that all necessary improvements are clearly identified and the impact of support and challenge are closely followed up in a clear cycle of improvement.

Catholic Life

The Quality of the Catholic Life of the School

1

- 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.

1

1

2

Pupils in St Bede's are at the centre of the mission of the school, and have an almost palpable sense of pride in belonging to the school community. They are very clear about what they gain from the Catholic Life of the school, in terms of opportunities for spiritual development and support, but they are also clear about the responsibilities they carry as a result of being in a Catholic school. This is the same for all groups of pupils. As a result, they are very willing to take on responsibilities for developing the Catholic character of the school; the chaplaincy team is a very good example of this, where older pupils actively encourage others to access prayer and spiritual support. The very good behaviour of the pupils in the classrooms and outside shows a clear understanding of the reasons behind the school rules, and an appreciation of the sanctions in place to ensure their own safety. They are also clear about the need for forgiveness and can cite many examples from the Bible to illustrate this. Pupils are very receptive to the opportunities offered by the school for their own personal support and development. For a few pupils, the school is a safe haven in sometimes troubled times, and as a result, they are happy and secure. There is a growing response to the work of the chaplaincy team, which impacts on adults as well as the pupils. The school's work on developing positive relationships through its Relationships and Sex Education programme is very evident in the obvious respect pupils have for both each other, and for adults. St Bede's is a truly cohesive community.

All staff support and are fully committed to the school's mission statement to develop the Gospel values of faith, hope and love in the pupils. There is a tangible sense of community at all levels across the school. The quality of the learning environment, with high quality displays and very well resourced focal areas for prayer in each classroom, reflect clearly the high priority placed on the Catholic Life of the school. The recently refurbished room for reflection, dedicated to the memory of a past pupil, is an extremely powerful resource for the whole community. The chaplaincy team, which consists entirely of pupils, provide excellent role models for their peers and contribute significantly to the very high standards of pastoral care shown to all members of the community. There is a very clear behaviour policy in place that actively promotes the concept of the choices pupils make to influence their actions. It is rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church, and stresses the importance of healing and reconciliation.

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. This is true of leadership at all levels, and includes the governors. They all lead by example. The headteacher has a crystal clear vision for the school as a truly Catholic and vibrant organisation, which is shared by the whole school community. The subject leader is outstanding in her support, and her high expectations for developing the Catholic Life of the school. The Governors are passionate about the school's mission and make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well, because it is a relatively small and very open community, but as yet, formal monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is only just being developed. Staff are very well supported to develop their understanding of the Catholic Life of the school, through comprehensive induction policies and informal peer support. The school works very well with parents and carers, including those who are sometimes difficult to reach, to achieve positive benefits for the pupils. Parents generally have a good understanding of the school's mission: as one parent said 'This school has values. They are the values I want my children to have, and that's why I send them here.'

Collective Worship

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- 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.

1

1

2

All pupils are extremely positive about their Collective Worship. They take part with enthusiasm, whether it is with a deep and prayerful silence, or singing their hearts out with some of their favourite hymns. There is a tangible sense of joy and reverence on such occasions. From the very youngest to the very oldest, pupils play an active and meaningful role in both leading and preparing their Collective Worship. They have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical celebrations and use scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music with confidence and ease. As a result, the prayer opportunities they create engage their interest and enthusiasm, and there is a clear sense of their enjoyment in the variety of methods they use. Pupils display a deep sense of respect for different faiths. A lovely example of this was captured on a Mum's mobile phone as she filmed her son showing his smaller sister how Muslims pray using an Islamic prayer mat - exactly as he had been shown in school. Those pupils taking part in the school's sacramental development programme are fully appreciative of the opportunities it provides them to further their own spiritual development. They look forward to the time when they can, as one pupil said, 'be in God's family and the family of the Church, receiving Christ's Body and Blood.'

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of school celebrations. Parents are regularly invited and welcomed into them. Key staff are very skilled in helping pupils both plan and deliver Collective Worship, and they support their colleagues well to develop their skills to a similar level. They have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage and see it as an essential part of their mission to share this with the pupils. They use their skills well to enable pupils to choose appropriate and personal themes for their worship, such as when older pupils chose to focus in their liturgy on the Prodigal Son to help them towards an experience of reconciliation. The outstanding subject leader oversees a carefully planned programme which progressively enables the pupils to develop both expertise and confidence in preparing liturgies of the highest quality. The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for Collective Worship, in class, as a whole school and in Church and works very effectively in partnership with the parish and parents in the delivery of the Sacramental Preparation programme.

Leaders and managers of the school have an excellent understanding of how to deliver very high quality examples of Collective Worship. They have a deeply rooted understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols, and as a result, the pupils are receiving a very secure and relevant grounding in high quality Collective Worship, and their response to this is outstanding. The headteacher, along with other staff, leads very high quality Collective Worship, and gives the pupils an excellent model to inform their own planning and delivery. Leaders and managers review Collective Worship regularly and informally. They talk to both pupils and staff about the quality of what they provide, but also recognise that this is an area where parents could be more involved and where monitoring and evaluation needs to be more rigorous in order to inform more precisely planned improvements. The school is absolutely committed to playing a full and active role in the delivery of quality Sacramental Preparation in accordance with diocesan policy.

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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2

2

2

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their Religious Education and are able to talk very articulately about what it means to them, and what they gain from it. They are keen to do well, and are responsive to teachers during lessons, taking an active part in their learning. While they are very interested and enthusiastic about their learning, the presentation of their work in their books does not always accurately reflect the quality of the work they do. By the time the pupils leave St Bede's, they have a good understanding, appropriate to their age, of the spiritual, ethical and theological demands of their faith, and a very good understanding of the demands this makes on their everyday lives. Pupils' progress in Religious Education has steadily improved over the last three years, so that now, almost all pupils, in all groups, are making at least expected progress. Few pupils, however, are currently making more than expected progress, and achieving the higher levels, both at the end of year two and year six. Bearing in mind, however, their starting points on entering the school, this indicates good progress overall. The learning and progress of pupils currently in the school would indicate that this improving trend will continue.

Teachers and other additional adults work hard to provide the pupils with suitably challenging tasks and fun activities so that they enjoy their Religious Education lessons. Teachers use high quality resources well, including their interactive whiteboards, to capture pupils' interests and keep them motivated to learn. This ensures that all groups of pupils, including those with additional needs, make progress and improve their attainment. Planning has clear learning objectives – teachers generally know exactly what they want their pupils to learn in each lesson. Marking is steadily improving, although needs to focus more on explaining to pupils their next steps in learning, and what they have to do to improve. Questioning is usually used well to probe pupils' understanding and challenge them further, and lessons are generally well paced and hold pupils' interest throughout. Assessment of pupils' work is also improving – there are good systems in place to ensure that staff are well supported in arriving at secure assessments of pupils' abilities, and that these are used to inform clear targets for learning. While middle and lower ability pupils are suitably challenged, however, higher ability pupils are not always challenged enough to make the progress of which they are capable. Where homework is set, it provides a good link with pupils' families, as when pupils in one class were asked to source a story from the Bible at home, and prepare their own 'bauble' to hang on

their Jesse tree as part of their Advent preparations.

Religious Education is recognised by all leaders, including governors, as the core subject of the school. As a result, it is well resourced and training in school and from the diocese is available to all and constantly updated. There is a clear recognition of the need to challenge for continual improvement, both from the teachers and from the governors. As a result of both formal and informal monitoring, the school has a very clear picture of its strengths and areas for development and these have enabled it to identify well focused strategies to improve. The school recognises, however, that it needs to further improve the rigour of its formal monitoring procedures, and be more precise in identifying clear areas for improvement, and assessing the impact of any improvement strategies. The curriculum leader is outstanding in her ability to provide an inspiration for the whole community, both within and outside school. She contributes significantly to the moral and spiritual development of the pupils. Together with the equally focused headteacher, she has played a significant role in ensuring that the teaching of Religious Education is consistently good across the school. The curriculum for Religious Education follows diocesan guidance, but is also enhanced by a variety of enrichment resources. It is also updated to meet the specific needs of the pupils of St Bede's. As a result, it is well matched to the needs of the pupils and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

Summary of Inspection Judgments

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

Catholic Life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

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

2

Collective Worship

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

1

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

2

Religious Education

2

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

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Religious Education	2	2	2	2
Catholic Life	1	1	2	1
Collective Worship	1	1	2	1
	1	1	2	1