

St Bede's & St Joseph's Catholic College

URN: 148520

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Leeds

12–13 June 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

1

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

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the Diocese of Leeds.
- The school has addressed all areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Senior leaders are passionate about their school and lead by example. Consequently, all staff serve as outstanding role models.
- Feedback and assessment within religious education is a notable strength, particularly the use of 'live marking' to establish progress made by students in their learning.
- The religious education curriculum is well sequenced and tailored to meet the needs of individual students and adaptive teaching is a strength. This supports a curriculum experience that engages many students.
- Pastoral care is outstanding, with the school having a real focus on supporting the most vulnerable within its community.
- Staff work well with students to deliver prayer and liturgy that invokes deep reverence and a sense of awe and wonder.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen questioning in religious education lessons so that all students can develop and articulate a deeper understanding.
- Work with local parishes to create opportunities for students to attend church through planned Masses and organised events.
- Ensure consistency in the delivery of prayer and liturgy during House Welcome Time.

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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Outcomes for Catholic life and mission at St Bede's and St Joseph's are outstanding because all staff and students understand and appreciate the distinctive Catholic identity and charism of their school. The warm, caring environment ensures that all feel valued and accepted as part of the school family. Students, staff and those in the wider community understand the school's mission and can articulate how it impacts on their everyday lives, regardless of faith. This is lived out through the school prayer; with one student commenting, 'I'm not Catholic but I say the school prayer every morning and try to live it out on a day-to-day basis'. Consequently, staff and students feel happy, safe and confident in school. Catholic social teaching principles are at the fore of the school's work and students articulate this confidently. They demonstrate this in many ways, most notably through their charity works for the most vulnerable in the local, national and global community. They understand that their response to social action is underpinned by the key teachings of Jesus and the Catholic Church. Students value the chaplaincy provision on offer and benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that enrich and develop them in a way that enables them to be active in the school's mission.

The school provides a full and rich Catholic life experience. Under the leadership of the headteacher, a highly valued inspirational role model, expert senior leaders and all staff drive the continued refinement of provision. Thus, they ensure that all behaviours and actions are focussed on the dignity of all members of the school community. Inclusivity is outstanding, with the school going above and beyond to ensure that everyone can faithfully follow their own beliefs whilst respecting those of others. Students comment positively on the house structure within school. Vertical tutor groups allow younger students to benefit from the direct support of their older peers; they value this highly. They also appreciate the 'Chatterbuddies' system that

operates in school, where nominated students offer support to those who need it. These initiatives contribute to the school's work in enabling students to become strong exponents of Catholic social teaching. Staff are exceptional role models, offering outstanding pastoral care. There is an unwavering commitment to the most vulnerable students in the school community, and this is complemented by strong relationships with external agencies, which help to promote wellbeing and raise aspiration amongst staff and students.

Leadership of Catholic life and mission is outstanding because leaders prioritise it as a core responsibility, ensuring that it underpins all whole school policies and practices. Catholic social teaching, particularly the preferential option for the poor, is at the heart of its strategic vision. The school has a healthy relationship with the diocese, accessing its training and support offer and its youth formation opportunities; capitalising on these further through a programme developed by the outstanding chaplaincy team. Recent training in school has prompted staff to actively seek out opportunities to make explicit links to Catholic social teaching within their subject areas, thus facilitating greater student understanding through contextual examples. Staff comment positively on governors' and leaders' nurturing approach, and their commitment to ensure that they receive the support needed to excel in their roles. The school has strong links with local parish priests, who play an active role in supporting staff and students with a variety of Catholic life initiatives. Leaders and governors have ensured that robust monitoring and evaluation processes are in place that inform and refine provision; with students being involved in the process.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

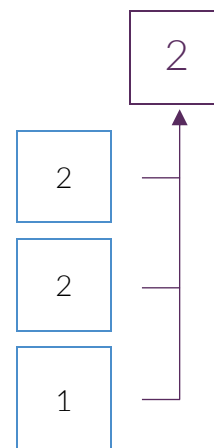
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Students enjoy their learning and engage well with their teachers. Their knowledge is good, with older students commenting that they have benefited from the implementation of the new scheme of work for religious education. Student progress and attainment in religious education is broadly in line with national figures and other core subjects within school. The department has worked hard to narrow the gap between boys and girls and, although there is still work to do, data shows that this now compares favourably to national data, an improving picture. The newly introduced 100-minute lessons have improved students' learning. Religious literacy is strong, and they utilise this well to develop their own understanding. The introduction of the 'Shine' zone to lessons allows students to consolidate their learning through independent tasks and they enjoy this. In some instances, the pace of lessons is too slow, particularly at the beginning. Student books are well presented, with feedback being regular and thought-provoking. Students respond well to this. Targeted intervention, coupled with effective feedback methods, accelerates the progress of all, particularly the disadvantaged. Students' books evidence clear progress being made throughout the year.

All staff have good subject knowledge and their commitment to their subject, matched with high expectations, ensures that most students rise to the challenge in lessons. The introduction of 100-minute lessons, which are broken down into four distinct zones, has been a 'game changer' for student progress. Students respond extremely well to each of the four lesson parts and comment on how much they like the different challenges that each brings to their learning. The strong assessment and feedback process in place identifies gaps in student understanding and subsequent detailed planning culminates in teaching that meets the students' needs. This has yet to be fully established but is making a real difference in the classroom. Teaching assistants are well deployed and students who need their support benefit hugely from their input. There

are some strong examples of adaptive teaching that ensure all students access their learning. Questioning is at its best when students are required to take time and reflect on their work, making connections that further develop their understanding. However, there are some missed opportunities to do this, which restricts students' deeper thinking. There is a strong culture of praise that is used effectively to motivate students, and they respond well to this.

The decision taken by leaders to address the needs of learners by restructuring the school day and, consequently, the whole school curriculum has proved to be of huge benefit to staff and students. They have ensured that the development of the *Religious Education Directory* curriculum, followed by ongoing reflection and refinement, has resulted in an inspiring learning experience, relevant to all learners. Religious education has full parity with other core subjects within school and, as such, religious education is a respected subject, where bespoke training addresses staff needs. The subject luminary and her line managers have worked well to rapidly embed the new religious education curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the new curriculum is an inclusive one, with new qualifications being introduced to cater for the needs of all learners. Leaders and governors also understand that the diversity within their school is such that enrichment activities need to reflect cultural understanding and acceptance. Consequently, a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities and visits are in place to complement the academic curriculum. Leaders have ensured that monitoring and evaluation processes that involve all stakeholders are in place; their findings being used to strengthen the learning experience for all students.

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

Students respond well to the many prayer and liturgy opportunities offered. They are familiar with traditional prayer that is offered in numerous creative ways. They also understand the shape of the liturgical year and can articulate how the school's prayer and liturgy themes are linked to this. These are delivered in an age-appropriate way, and they readily participate. Students are confident in undertaking responsibilities during these moments, with the number involved in doing so increasing. The school recognises that there is work to be done to improve planning and participation and they are active in creating new opportunities to promote this. Students show respect and reverence during House Worship gatherings and there is a tangible feeling of spirituality during these times. A good number of students are members of the Bradford Catholic School Choir and, supported by the diocesan music service, they excel in sharing their talents during times of worship. Students are also involved in the evaluation of the school's prayer and liturgy offer. Consequently, they can easily articulate how their experiences influence the school's wider life. They make connections to the circumstances of others during these moments and comment on how they are compelled to act, citing the school's priority for their own spiritual formation.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the school and the school prayer punctuates the beginning and close of the day. Staff and students comment on it being their 'anchor' as they carry out their work. Scripture readings are relevant to the church's year and are contextualised during prayer times. Worship during House Welcome Time is good but delivery is inconsistent, with some students not having the opportunity to access a full spiritual experience. Most staff are skilled in their delivery, but not all staff have the confidence or knowledge to ensure a consistent offer across the school. Leaders are aware of this and strive to ensure that all students encounter a high-quality experience through regular training that is scheduled to build staff confidence and

develop their understanding with prayer and liturgy. The school has good links with families, but the strengthening of links with feeder parishes is limited. The school's commitment to retreat and pilgrimage opportunities is commendable. There is a long-established relationship with Ampleforth Abbey, and comprehensive retreat provision is available for staff and students in all years. Students comment on the impact of these experiences, stating that opportunities such as these allow them to deepen their spiritual understanding and explore their faith more in terms of their own personal circumstances.

Leaders and governors ensure that the spiritual formation of all members of the school community are at the fore of their thinking. Consequently, they ensure that ample time and resourcing are dedicated to prayer and liturgy. Many events that take place in school are planned carefully to develop the involvement and engagement of students. The newly reviewed prayer and liturgy policy is well-considered, being tailored to suit the needs of staff and students. Staff training has taken place on this and a renewed focus is evident through discussion and in practice. The local parish priests offer weekly Masses in school and the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. The school also places a high tariff on holy days of obligation and patron days, with Mass being celebrated to mark these occasions. Leaders ensure that there are regular formation opportunities within their training and development programme and staff value this. The evaluation of prayer and liturgy by leaders, staff and students has high priority and informs future planning, refining the prayer and liturgy experience for all.

Information about the school

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| Full name of school | St Bede's & St Joseph's Catholic College |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 148520 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 3804023 |
| Full postal address of the school | St Bede's & St Joseph's Catholic College, Highgate, Heaton, Bradford, BD9 4BQ |
| School phone number | 01274941941 |
| Headteacher | Lawrence Bentley |
| Chair of governors | John Shaw |
| School Website | http://sbsj.co.uk/ |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust |
| Phase | Secondary |
| Type of school | Academy |
| Admissions policy | Non-selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | June 2017 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good |

The inspection team

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|--------------------|------|
| Mark Taylor | Lead |
| Marianne Wilkinson | Team |
| Catherine Danaher | Team |
| Patrick Caldwell | 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 |