

# St Bede's Catholic Primary School

URN: 116380

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Portsmouth

21–22 May 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

#### 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

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

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

## Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

## What the school does well

- St Bede's lives out its mission as a Catholic school where Christ is firmly at its heart ensuring all pupils and staff feel loved, valued and recognised as people of God.
- The Inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that the vision and values of Catholic education are fully embedded, shared and celebrated. His work and those of other leaders and governors, has led to high quality relationships between all members of the school community in this highly successful Catholic school
- The pupils' religious education enables them to achieve well and speak with enthusiasm about their learning due to the well-planned lessons and activities. They engage well, are articulate and show positive behaviour and attitudes
- The high quality music provided by pupils and staff enhances all aspects of school life especially experiences of prayer and liturgy,
- Pupils participate fully, showing reverence and engagement in the well planned experiences of prayer and liturgy, led with confidence by pupils and staff.

## What the school needs to improve

- Increase opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their learning through greater independence and creativity in how they respond to tasks.

## 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

The whole school community wholeheartedly embrace and value St Bede's distinctly Catholic identity and its mission. Pupils can confidently articulate how they live out the mission 'To love one another, as I have loved you,' by recognising that they should love like Jesus did. Pupils show compassion and care for each other, recognising they are valued as children of God with unique gifts and talents. As a result, they feel loved and valued and are rightly proud of their school. Pupils at St Bede's are developing a strong moral understanding of their personal responsibility to care for the environment and to serve others, such as in their support for charities like Mary's Meals. Catholic social teaching is central to the life of the school, as a result, pupils have a well-developed understanding and actively engage in responding to its demands. They are provided with opportunities to identify charities to support, as was seen in the house captains' celebration of the word, where pupils were invited to nominate a charity to support. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are kind, respectful and recognise Christ in others. Pupils actively participate in and contribute to the opportunities for ministries and chaplaincy provided by the school.

Staff are exemplary role models as they bear active witness to all aspects of school life. They are proud to belong to a faith-filled community and share a strong sense of community. There is a tangible sense of community at St Bede's and it is evident that Christ is at the centre. The sense of welcome is outstanding as is seen by the quality of relationships at all levels. Staff promote great pastoral care for their pupils, providing nurturing experiences for all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. The school is a diverse community, celebrated through events such as International day and the recognition of the human dignity of each person has led to a very inclusive school. The school environment is well cared for and is a visible sign of the school's mission and Catholic identity. The care and attention, especially the beautiful Prayer Garden, contributes positively to the community's formation. Chaplaincy provision offers high

quality opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff, which all appreciate and value. This includes offering ALPHA for staff and a staff retreat to Wintershall. Relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned to reflect Catholic teachings and principles fully.

Leaders and governors have a profound understanding of the Church's mission in and Bishop's vision for education and ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school. The headteacher's personal witness is a source of inspiration for the community. In a spirit of generosity, leaders offer support to other schools, seeing it as God's call to promote the greater good of Catholic schools. Strong links with the parish is enhanced due to the proximity of the church, described as the school's chapel. Parents recognise that the school provides their children with a faith-filled environment which enables them to strengthen their relationship with God. One parent commented, 'We particularly appreciate how the school involves families in its Catholic mission, making us feel welcome and included in liturgical celebrations and charitable outreach.' Leaders demonstrate exemplary commitment to the common good and service to those in the greatest need. Leaders and governors are highly committed to respecting the dignity of staff. Consequently, staff feel cared for and value the support for their professional development. Induction is effective in providing new staff with the knowledge and understanding of what it means to contribute to the Catholic life and mission of the school. The school has a well-planned approach to self-evaluation leading to decisive action which has enhanced the life and mission of the school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

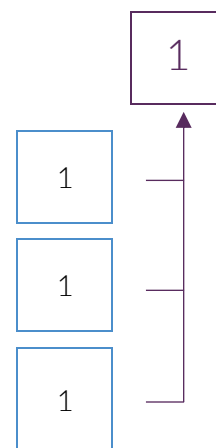
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and develop excellent knowledge and skills as a consequence. They make consistently good progress as they are curious and interested learners. Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are well supported by additional adults; ensuring all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils are religiously literate and can articulate what they have learnt in religious education. They confidently use scripture and religious vocabulary to explain key concepts and make links with everyday life. REcap activities enable pupils to recall prior learning in religious education ensuring knowledge is remembered and applied in their work. Pupils are exceptionally engaged in their lessons and consistently demonstrate high levels of concentration. However, they are not always given the opportunity to think creatively with independence as their learning is often very structured and over scaffolded. Their written work shows pupils produce work of a consistently high standard, taking pride in their work. Behaviour and attitudes in lessons is outstanding. Older pupils could explain how they made use of assessment grids to help them review their learning and are motivated to make progress. However, the approach to feedback is not consistent across the school and the younger pupils were unsure of how they would know how well they were doing. Pupils' attainment in religious education is consistently above their achievement in other curriculum subjects.

Teachers set high expectations for religious education, this is effectively communicated to pupils and evidenced by meticulous planning, excellent subject knowledge and the employment of teaching methods which enables pupils to learn exceptionally well. When teachers plan, they carefully consider pupils' prior and current knowledge based on their on-going assessments leading to purposeful learning. Teachers accurately model the use of religious language and explain themes effectively and with confidence, maximising learning opportunities for pupils. Teachers understand the impact of religious education on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and in some lessons pupils have the opportunity for

purposeful reflection on their learning. During religious education lessons, pupils are encouraged to make links between beliefs and their experience of the world; Year 6 pupils reviewed news articles in the light of the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit whilst making links with Catholic social teaching. Teachers plan carefully and provide high quality resources which enables pupils to present their learning in a variety of ways. This was particularly noticeable in the excellent activities planning in Early Years to enhance understanding of Pentecost and in Year 1 where the Godly Play approach was used to engage the children.

The RE subject leader, alongside the headteacher, share a clear and inspiring vision for religious education which is effectively communicated to all staff, leading to high quality teaching and learning. Staff speak highly of her expertise and of the support she offers and are confident that they will receive excellent help and advice if needed. The subject content is based on the diocesan scheme, God Matters. It is effectively sequenced ensuring each unit builds on prior learning, which supports pupils in knowing and remembering more. Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given the same parity as other core curriculum subjects in terms of resourcing, timetabling and high quality professional development. The school provides a range of enrichment activities that promote pupils' enjoyment and engagement in learning, including the Wintershall travelling crib which promoted awe and wonder of the Nativity. Self-evaluation by leaders is robust and informed through monitoring and evaluation. Precise and effective action is taken to improve teaching and achievement. Recent changes to governor monitoring visits have ensured that governors capture evidence to support their evaluation of religious education and Catholic life and mission. This approach now needs to be embedded and reported in governors meetings so that leaders' feedback is triangulated.

## 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

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

The varied and wide-ranging opportunities of prayer and liturgy actively supports the faith-formation of pupils, who are able to reflect on their experience of prayer and how this inspires them. One pupil said, 'During prayer time, God is always listening, so I feel loved.' Pupils participate wholeheartedly, responding with high levels of reverence and confidently joining in with responses and singing joyfully. This was witnessed in the high-quality Year 5 class celebration of the word on the theme of compassion, where scripture, music, and reflection time were all employed to great effect and where all participants responded with attentiveness and openness to the love of God in their lives. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the forms of prayer appropriate to the Church's liturgical year because there is an embedded pattern of prayer which reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. They also value the opportunity to pray spontaneously and for world events, such as the election of the new Pope. Pupils are keen to take on liturgical ministries which they do with reverence, skill and confidence. Older pupils act as excellent role models to their Early Years' buddies through leading prayers and modelling reverence during Eucharistic Adoration.

The school is a prayerful community with Christ at its head. The centrality of prayer and liturgy at St Bede's is clearly laid out in the school's annual plan which reflect the richness of the Catholic tradition. All prayer and liturgy experiences have scripture at the heart with links made to how the message of scripture impacts our lives. The headteacher models exemplary practice by leading inspirational prayer as was seen in his leading of Adoration for Early Years and Year 6 buddies. Staff are encouraged to participate actively in the school's prayer life. They are skilled in supporting pupils to plan and lead prayer as was witnessed in the celebration of the word led by the house captains. The creative and artistic skills of pupils and staff are used to excellent effect to enhance prayer experiences for the pupils; for example, pupils played flutes and violin to enhance the respectful gathering for whole school celebration of the word. The school makes excellent use of the space available to create well presented prayer areas,

celebrating the centrality of the Catholic ethos through thoughtful displays. Families are invited to join in the prayer life of the pupils, and recognise the work the school has done in developing their child's faith formation and relationship with God.

School leaders have developed a prayer and liturgy policy that clearly sets their expectations and is securely embedded. At all times the community experiences high-quality prayer and liturgy because of the investment in formation of staff who have an excellent understanding of the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school. Leaders and staff prepare pupils well to become confident leaders of prayer and liturgy. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in evaluating prayer times because of the careful guidance and support they have received. There is a well planned school calendar and timetable to ensure regular opportunities to celebrate Mass which reflect key events of the liturgical year including holy days of obligation and the school's feast day. During Advent and Lent, pupils have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Governors frequently attend Masses, times of prayer and liturgies and hence contribute to its evaluation, including eliciting the views of pupils. Leaders have robust system in place to monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes which are used to inform future actions.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	116380
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8503415
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Popley Way, Basingstoke, RG24 9DX
School phone number	001256533079
Headteacher	Jamie Carroll
Chair of governors	Liz Flaherty
School Website	<a href="http://www.stbedesprimary.co.uk/">www.stbedesprimary.co.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Ursula Clark  
Veronica Woodward

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