



St Bede's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148486

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle

28 January 2026 – 29 January 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

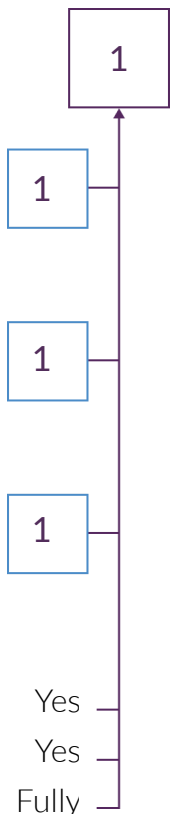
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- The prayer life at St Bede's is at the heart of the school. The centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school is clear across a range of sources.
- There is a lived sense of community evident in the quality of relationships and the strong culture of welcome to parents, the wider family network and parish.
- Pupils are happy, confident and feel secure. There is a true sense of inclusion for all and a commitment to the service of those in greatest need.
- Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment and high expectations for religious education. They have a clear understanding of the impact religious education has on the moral development of pupils.
- The school environment is testament to its Catholic identity and mission. The care and attention given to the quality of space and purposeful displays contributes positively to formation of staff and pupils.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve and to be able to fully articulate how they will make further progress.
- Plan for opportunities for pupils to deepen their theological understanding to be able to articulate this knowledge fluently and confidently.

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

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils understand and fully embrace the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of St Bede's. They value it greatly. From the very first introduction to the school, it was evident that pupils have a clear understanding that their school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus. Pupils value each other and feel cared for. They understand that they are made in the image and likeness of God and are happy, confident and feel secure. One pupil commented 'Everyone is loved here in our school.' Pupils take a leading and proactive role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. They fully embrace the responsibility to care for our Common Home and serve those in need. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the actions they are taking to achieve the Live Simply Award. The active Mini Vinnies and Eco Schools leadership groups described their efforts with enthusiasm explaining about switch off fortnight, the harvest foodbank appeal and the big beach clean-up. Pupils are willing to take on leadership roles and actively participate in and contribute to the opportunities provided by the school. Pupils show a deep respect for those of other faiths, religions and none. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in lessons and throughout school.

All pupils can articulate the school's mission statement: 'With Christ at our side to guide us, we shine in all that we do.' This mission is known, lived and witnessed to throughout the school. Pupils talked passionately about their school values. One pupil discussed the value of forgiveness saying, 'We forgive others because God forgives us. Our school value of forgiveness means we give everyone a fresh start.' There is a strong and lived sense of community at St Bede's with Christ truly at the heart of the school. This is evident in the

quality of relationships and the strong culture of welcome in a spirit of generous hospitality. There is a high level of pastoral support and care for all, including the most vulnerable. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils, through their relationships with each other and the love and care they demonstrate at all times. The school environment is a clear witness to its Catholic identity proclaiming the mission and ethos. There are explicit and effective signs of the school's Catholic character throughout with careful thought and attention given to the quality of displays visible around the school. The provision for relationship, sex and health education (RSHE) is carefully and creatively planned. Pupils, staff and parents talk enthusiastically about the regular 'house meetings' which helps to strengthen relationships and enhance the teaching of key RHE themes to the pupils.

Leaders and governors have a very clear vision for St Bede's. They are joyful and determined in their pursuit of the Catholic life and mission of the school and ensure that Christ is always at the heart of the community. Leaders are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic social teaching. Through their passion and high levels of expertise, leaders are ambitious and they inspire staff and the wider community to follow their commitment and dedication. Staff feel they are well supported, valued as individuals and are a team. Leaders and governors provide the highest levels of pastoral care for staff with a clear commitment to their wellbeing. There is a flourishing partnership between the school, parents and the local parish which is acknowledged and appreciated by all. The parish priest describes that the school has, 'unlimited access to the church' and it is clear that everyone benefits from this open relationship and shared mission. Governors are highly ambitious and passionate for the Catholic life of the school. The school's self-evaluation is a reflection of searching analysis and honest self-challenge from leaders and governors.

Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

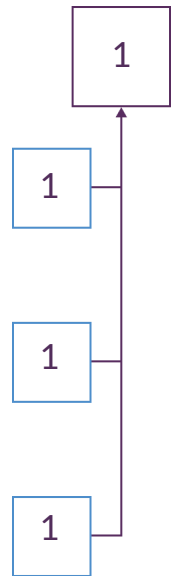
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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, relative to their age, are religiously literate and a high priority is placed on religious vocabulary helping pupils to speak confidently about what they have learned. For example, pupils in the older year groups were able to use some higher order subject specific vocabulary. Pupils are developing excellent knowledge with the '3 minutes, 3 questions recall' helping to exemplify learning. They can demonstrate their understanding in original and creative ways such as through the use of spirited artwork, role play and hot seating. Pupils concentrate exceptionally well in lessons and love the challenge of learning, resulting in outstanding behaviour. The use of 'big questions' enables them to further develop as competent learners. Pupils are motivated to produce work of a consistently high quality through initiatives such as 'St Bede's Best'. They are actively engaged and approach lessons with enthusiasm. Pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of how well they are doing; they are not able to fully articulate the progress they have made and what they need to do to improve further in order to deepen learning. Pupils are beginning to show an understanding of theological knowledge; however, they are not able to articulate this knowledge fluently and confidently in order to make further progress.

Teachers have a high level of confidence and expertise relative to the phase they are teaching in. Teachers and support staff demonstrate a deep commitment and high expectations for religious education. They are role models in the way they communicate this effectively to pupils. Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact that religious education has on pupils' spiritual development and their ability to make meaningful sense of

their experiences of the world. A member of staff commented that, 'I regularly see children asking thoughtful questions, making connections to their own lives, and truly growing in faith.' Lesson observations showed clear links to Catholic social teaching and school values alongside learning from scripture. All adults in lessons, teachers and support staff, are a high-quality resource ensuring that learning is sequential for all pupils and, as a result, lessons consolidate and extend pupils knowledge. Teachers use questioning skilfully and effectively to ensure learners are fully included in lessons and explanations adapted to maximise learning for all pupils. The use of visualisers throughout the school ensures that work is clearly celebrated leading to high levels of motivation from pupils. They feel valued and encouraged as their contributions and efforts are clearly recognised by their teachers.

The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision and a high level of expertise in securing this. Together, with leaders and governors, the subject leader is robust in her self evaluation bringing together her analytical skills, reflection and challenge to ensure that strategic action is well targeted and leads to effective outcomes. The subject leader is deeply committed to sharing her expertise for the benefit of others as staff openly discuss her unwavering support and open-door policy. She is an enthusiastic advocate for religious education and actively supports staff with the planning and preparation of lessons. Leaders and governors prioritise religious education to the extent that it has at least full parity with other core curriculum areas, especially prioritising the environment. A real strength in the leadership of religious education is the commitment to offering relevant professional development to staff members and ongoing support through professional dialogue. Leaders and governors, supported by the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust staff, ensure that monitoring of religious education is robust and informs termly key priorities which are reviewed regularly. Leaders ensure that religious education is planned and structured to build on and enhance prior learning.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

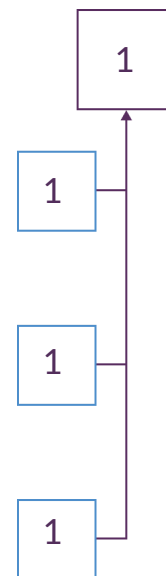
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Prayer and liturgy are central to life at St Bede's. Pupils fully engage in a spiritual and reverent way with a wide variety of opportunities provided by the school. They work collaboratively with teachers to plan creative and well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy and their skills progress rapidly as they move through the school. Pupils undertake liturgical ministries with confidence. They regularly lead prayer, and their skills are well-embedded. Where wider members of the school community are invited in to pray with the pupils, a parent commented, 'We value the opportunities for prayer and reflection led by the children and the emphasis on living faith through actions.' Pupils demonstrate their response to prayer in a reverent and attentive way. They engage deeply in prayer and liturgy experiences, and this is evident through the quality of prayerful silence, communal singing and appropriate gestures. One pupil commented 'I am really happy when I get a little moment to talk to God and reflect on my day.' Pupils can talk about their favourite traditional prayers. They reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy with confidence and can describe how these experiences have inspired them to act and shaped how they think and feel.

The prayer life at St Bede's is at the heart of the school. The centrality of prayer and liturgy is clearly lived across a range of evidence sources with a naturally embedded daily pattern of prayer. Prayer and liturgy is scaffolded, progressive and purposeful. Well-chosen scripture passages, informed by the liturgical season, are at the heart of prayer and liturgy. Staff, including senior leaders, model exemplary practice. They are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. One member of staff commented, 'Prayer is central to our school day. Whether it's classroom prayer, whole-school celebration of

the word, or quiet moments of reflection, pupils are given meaningful opportunities to develop their relationship with God.' The creative prayer area is an example of how well the school uses imaginative spaces to provide the pupils with an area that is owned by them and conducive to prayer. Pupils were able to describe articulately how they use this creative prayer area and spoke passionately about the recent 'week of peace'. Families are included in the prayer life of the school and very much value this opportunity to become 'united as one community.' The support from the local parish ensures that a flourishing partnership exists to help pupils to participate more fully in the liturgy.

There is a true sense of pride when speaking to leaders about how effectively the school's policy on prayer and liturgy has been formulated and embedded. It is accessible to all as pupils and staff live and witness to the centrality of prayer and liturgy. One staff member commented, 'I feel blessed to work in a school where faith is genuinely at the heart of everything we do. Our times of prayer together create an atmosphere of peace, purpose, and unity.' Leaders, including governors place the highest priority on professional development of all staff that focuses on liturgical formation. The power of prayer has been role modelled by leaders to ensure that staff are highly skilled and well supported to lead meaningful and inspirational experiences of prayer and liturgy. Leaders, including governors, place the highest priority on the monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy and the voice of pupils and wider members of the community is a valued part of the self-evaluation cycle. The strong partnership with the parish ensures that opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are regularly offered and that key times in the liturgical year are marked and celebrated within the life of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148486
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3933301
Full postal address of the school	Claypath Lane, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 4PG
School phone number	0191 456 0108
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Carol Devine
Chair of Governors	Mrs Catherine Ellwood
School Website	www.stbedessouthshields.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	21 March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Claire Garbutt Lead

Thomas Gillingham

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