



Our Lady And St Bede Catholic Academy

URN: 141370

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

20–21 November 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

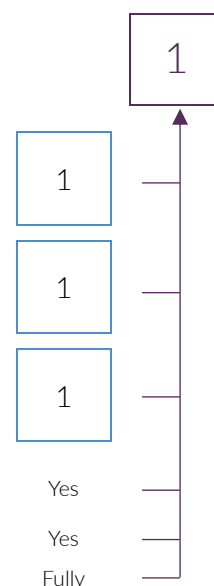
Collective worship (p.7)

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



Compliance statement

- Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by Bishops' Conference.
- Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy is fully compliant with the requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy has fully responded to all areas for improvement since the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The school is a beacon of hope and love for students and families in their local area. The school always goes the extra mile to support those in the greatest need and their response to social action is inspirational.
- The headteacher and senior leaders for Catholic life and mission are truly incredible witnesses to the faith, they lead with authenticity, integrity, passion and are true servant leaders.
- The religious education curriculum is creative, engaging, varied and meaningful. As a result students described religious education to be both 'amazing' and 'eye-opening'.
- The school is passionate about forming the whole student. They place great emphasis on holistic development and ensuring every student can journey in faith.
- There is a flourishing partnership between the school and the parish. The parish priest provides outstanding support to the school and supports all staff and students on their spiritual journey.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide students in Key Stage 4 opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection in religious education lessons.
- Embed the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* into the school's prayer and liturgy provision.

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



Students at Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy fully understand and embrace the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of their school. They articulate with clarity how faith shapes their lives, describing their school as, 'a place of love and community', 'the definition of hope', and affirming that, 'you are never alone here'. They show deep respect for themselves and others, modelling courtesy, kindness and inclusion. Students flourish as they seek to grow in virtue and live out Catholic social teaching through practical action and social justice. Their commitment to service is exemplary supporting Cafod, St Vincent de Paul Society and local charities. They also participate in diocesan and national events such as FLAME, retreats, and pilgrimages to Walsingham and Rome. Students are passionate about caring for the environment and the common good, speaking confidently about the impact of the Live Simply Award and their efforts to challenge injustice locally. Students demonstrate a mature sense of moral purpose and personal dignity, actively shaping a community rooted in Gospel values. They are proud to belong to a school where all are valued, loved and known as unique individuals created in the image and likeness of God.

The school's motto, 'to know God is to know me' is authentically lived and witnessed across the school. The community is joyful, inclusive and rooted in Christ's command to love one another. Pastoral care is exceptional; staff work tirelessly to ensure that every child is known personally and supported to flourish academically, spiritually and emotionally. Relationships throughout the school are warm, respectful and grounded in the dignity of the human person. Students of all faiths and none are welcomed with generosity and respect, and all feel that they belong. Staff are exemplary role models who embody the school's mission statement in daily life; their professional dedication and pastoral commitment ensure that all students needs are addressed. Chaplaincy provision is dynamic and central to the mission, offering extensive opportunities for prayer, reflection and encounter. Staff articulate their work as a vocation and speak of the school as, 'a haven of peace'. The physical

environment reflects Catholic identity through vibrant displays, sacred spaces and symbols that witness to the school's faith. The life and mission of the school are deeply rooted in the word of God and expressed through action, service and joy.

Leaders and governors are authentic witnesses to the Gospel who place Christ at the heart of all decision-making. They are deeply committed to ensuring that the mission statement is lived in every aspect of school life, and they provide a clear moral and strategic vision rooted in the teachings of the Church. Leaders believe that the school is a sanctuary where every pupil is cherished and encouraged to flourish. They engage actively with diocesan priorities and are generous in supporting other schools in developing their Catholic life through staff training. Governors are ambitious for the mission, holding leaders to account through rigorous and reflective self-evaluation. Catholic social teaching informs leadership decisions at every level, ensuring that resources are directed towards those most in need and that the school remains faithful to the Church's preferential option for the poor. Partnerships with parents, parishes and the wider community are strong and life-giving. Through prayerful discernment, courageous leadership and joyful service, leaders ensure that the school continues to be a beacon of faith, hope and love — a community where the mission of the Church is powerfully lived and shared.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

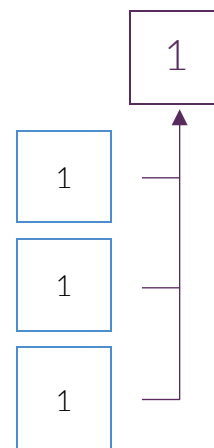
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 demonstrate exemplary understanding of theological knowledge and masterful skills. They all make excellent progress and demonstrate incredible depth of religious literacy. Students produce work that is superb in both quality and creativity. They love to demonstrate their learning through a wide variety of exciting expressions including poetry, drama, model making and artwork. Students are motivated to succeed and inspired by their own aspirational targets. Engagement in lessons is exceptional, and students demonstrate an outstanding level of enthusiasm for the subject, stating that, 'they love RE' and that lessons are both, 'amazing' and 'eye-opening'. As a result, behaviour in lessons is excellent. Students are curious to enhance their learning through questioning. They show great maturity in their approach to independent study, because of the clear expectations and guidance of their teachers. Regular engagement in self and peer assessment, enable the students to know what they are achieving and how to make further progress. Students truly value the expertise of their teachers and praise their efforts to develop understanding through engaging lessons, personalised feedback, encouragement and praise. At Our Lady and St. Bede's, religious education inspires, 'hearts and minds' and leaves students eager to undertake further theological study.

All teachers demonstrate exceptional subject knowledge and inspirational passion for religious education. As a consequence, students are excited to study this subject. They model the highest expectations for their students who willingly rise to the challenge set. Planning is purposeful, thoughtful and intended to allow students to express themselves using their God given gifts and talents in an inspiring variety of forms of expression. As a result, students excel in their religious education curriculum. Teachers at this school use planned questioning to provoke intrigue in lessons and demonstrate skilful adaptation of this to address difficulty of understanding or misconceptions. Teachers constantly celebrate and reward the incredible work produced by students and virtue

rewards are constantly given when students produce quality work or answers. There is an authentic culture of love, praise and care embedded in every lesson leading to a majestic climate for learning within lessons. The department endeavours to cultivate a love for further learning through their leadership of theological diocesan conferences such as the Vardy conference and the Forgiveness, Peace and Justice conference which give students the opportunity to explore key theological topics with other diocesan schools and speakers. Regular opportunities are provided in Key Stage 3 for spiritual and moral reflection, although this is not fully embedded in Key Stage 4.

Leaders and governors ensure that the new *Religious Education Directory* is not just faithfully expressed, rather that it has become a beacon for the diocese of exceptional practice. Religious education is truly the 'core of the core' at this school and is given full parity in resources. The school invests heavily in professional development for its religious education staff, and they embrace the diocesan Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies programme and Durham University training to enhance the subject knowledge of their staff. The subject leader for religious education is inspiring, passionate, innovative and a trailblazer of ingenuity. Highly regarded by all staff and all students, he leads as an authentic witness to the faith and he transforms hearts and minds in his approach to religious education. This leads to a department that is equally passionate in the delivery of truly outstanding religious education. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum has been designed to inspire and enthuse students and they have sought every opportunity to ensure the curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to engage in religious education beyond the classroom itself.

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

Students have an immersive experience of prayer and liturgy. They await key moments in the liturgical year with joyful anticipation. Advent, Lent and remembrance reflections captivate students. Student leadership of prayer and liturgy is inspiring, emotive and deeply humbling. They are encouraged to take ownership of worship such as the incredible worship choir who sing majestically. Additionally, the talented performing arts department and their students who create reflective and transformative liturgical productions. This leads to worship that encompasses a wide range of magnificent elements deepening the belief and spirituality of students from all faiths and none. Students are keen to lead readings, reflections, prayer and moments of contemplation. The Examen is appreciated by both students and staff, and they truly value the calmness it brings them. Opportunities for prayer and liturgy are masterfully created, and students report that they enjoy the time to reflect and it, 'sets them up for the day ahead'. Students really look forward to working together to prepare the Friday morning reflection; they listen and engage respectfully and attentively during these services. Planning these reflections as a form is seen as being a highlight of their year.

Prayer and liturgy are enshrined in the rhythm of the school. The parish priest commented that spirituality and faith, 'are natural' to the students and staff. Every morning begins with prayer, every week begins with a celebration of the word created by the Headteacher who genuinely leads with authenticity. The assistant headteacher is an outstanding witness, he has transformed student leadership and has created a culture where students strive to be involved with the leadership of prayer and liturgy. He is a phenomenal role model. Staff are incredibly skilful in leading prayer and liturgy, and they empower students to lead their own daily Examen videos which are disseminated across the school. The headteacher leads like a good shepherd, the senior leadership team are strong faith leaders and as a result have created a culture where staff embrace their love of worship and follow in their witness. Our Lady and St. Bede's is a model of innovation when it comes to creativity in worship

and they create acts of worship that bring to life key moments in the liturgical year and that truly have a profound impact on students, staff and the community they serve.

Leaders work closely with the parish priest who provides steadfast and inspiring support to the school, always enthusing and leading the spiritual formation of both students and staff with humour, selflessness and passion. As a result, students and staff choose to undertake the sacrament of confirmation in impressive numbers and seek regular opportunities to grow in their own spiritual formation. Leaders have ensured that students develop not only the skills and knowledge to engage in worship, but that they are able to independently lead deeply meaningful and powerful expressions of worship. The 'pop up prayers' and 'prayer partner' initiatives are incredible and students talked passionately about these. The headteacher, senior leaders and lay chaplain are incredibly skilful in modelling high-quality experiences of prayer and liturgy. They inspire staff to journey in faith through their humbling and passionate authentic faith which is deeply rooted in everything that they do. Professional development is transformative and equips all staff to be able to deliver the most meaningful experiences of prayer and liturgy. However, the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* is not fully embedded across the school. The parish priest regularly supports with the delivery of staff training for prayer and liturgy leading skilled staff who can facilitate powerful opportunities for prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Our Lady And St Bede Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	141370
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8084006
Full postal address of the school	Bishopton Road West, Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 0QH
School phone number	01642704970
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Maureen Wilkinson
Chair of local governing committee	Michael Lee
School Website	www.olsb.bhcet.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Andrew Young	Lead
Rob Young	Team
Fran Craik	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

