



St Bede's Catholic Academy Stockton-on-Tees

URN: 140442

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

11–12 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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

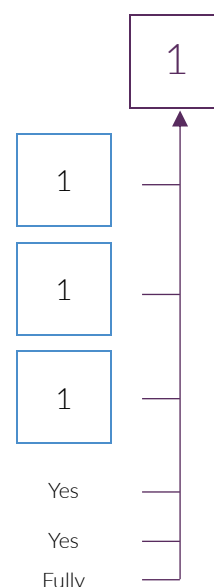
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- St Bede's Catholic Academy is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Bede's Catholic Academy is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- St Bede's Catholic Academy has responded to and met the area for further development which was identified during the last inspection.

What the school does well

- St Bede's is a beacon in its local community. It is relentless in its encouragement for each and every child in the school. Each child is loved and nurtured equally.
- Pupils embody the outstanding nature of St Bede's. They are articulate, ambitious and genuinely care for each other. The motto, 'Hearts in Stockton, eyes on the world' flows seamlessly through everything that they do.
- Families see the school as more than simply 'education' for their child. It is central to the wider parish and community, and provides guidance, support and care for everyone who comes into contact with the school.
- Standards in religious education are outstanding. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements, and teaching of the subject shows exceptionality in most year groups.
- Pupils participate actively and with enthusiasm in all aspects of worship, and are confident and skilled in their delivery and leading of worship.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the clarity over the evaluation of Catholic life and mission by all leaders is made more explicit.
- Further enhance and develop opportunities for pupils to express themselves through creative and spontaneous prayer.

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 are clearly loved and valued at St Bede's, and every child is respected for their own individuality and uniqueness. One Year 5 child stated, 'I know that I am loved by all the teachers. They all take an interest in me and my family.' Pupils are aware of opportunities given to them, such as Mini Vinnies and Power of Women ambassadors, and they respond to this offer with enthusiasm and confidence. Pupils have high aspirations and can articulate the offer given – 'heart in Stockton, eyes on the world' – with many being offered the opportunity to visit top universities along with their parents. Behaviour is consistently exemplary, both in classrooms and during more social occasions. Pupils have a deep understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching and how these formulate into their faith journey. Pupils share a common belief that they have a responsibility to all in their community, particularly the most vulnerable, and were rightly pleased with the impact of both individual and joint actions. In a school with many faiths and cultures, pupils show respect and a profound interest in the values and beliefs of others. One child stated that she, 'loved learning about Islam, even though I'm a Catholic. It made me understand the beliefs of my friends more.'

The mission of the school flows through everything that they do. One parent stated that St Bede's, 'lives out its mission to the wider world'. It is a meaningful expression of its values and purpose. Christ is central to St Bede's community. They welcome everyone regardless of faith or background, celebrating the diverse nature of their community at all levels. Staff dedication is commendable; they are clear role models, showing respect to pupils, parents and colleagues. They view their roles as a calling and actively engage in school activities, ensuring all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, feel valued and loved. Relationships between adults and pupils is extremely strong; there is a real feeling of warmth as soon as you walk in the door. The school

environment celebrates the diversity of the community, whilst the distinct catholicity of St Bede's is evident everywhere, providing pupils with the opportunities to develop their faith. There is a clear pride in celebrating all pupils' efforts. This was particularly evident in the exhibition of work produced at home. Parents strongly recognise this aspect of school, not only for their own children, but on the personal and life changing effect on their own families. The provision of Relationships and Health Education is strong; the use of an agreed scheme, alongside support such as Commando Joe and First Aid for All, ensures pupils have a firm basis for learning of essential life skills.

School leaders demonstrate outstanding leadership in the Catholic life of the school. The vision of leaders is clearly visible in everything that goes on in school. Staff and parents view the school leadership as both 'inspirational' and 'transformative', identifying how school goes above and beyond in caring for their children. Catholic social teaching principles are lived out daily, particularly preferential option for the poor, with families supported with new uniforms, resources and signposting to support groups. Support for staff is genuine and heartfelt. Staff have access to the Bungalow Wellbeing Programme, whilst little actions, such as giving out love hearts on Valentine's Day, creates, 'an authentic, supportive and caring atmosphere.' Governors value the Catholic life of the school and have many opportunities to be a part of developing this aspect of school life. They understand that St Bede's is a place where there is a focus on, 'compassion and high expectations for all'. However, the evaluation of Catholic life and mission is not clear, leading to some confusion with the understanding of the quality of this aspect.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

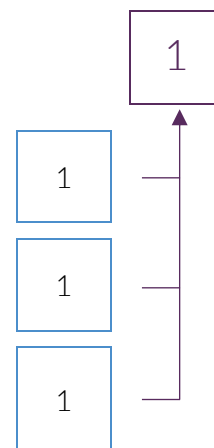
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Outcomes in religious education are of a consistently high quality. All pupils, including the most disadvantaged, make sustained progress over time. There is clear evidence of high challenge and expectations throughout, with scaffolding and adaptation supporting, but not stifling, the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and are proud to talk about this. There is strong evidence throughout books of a cycle of revisiting learning, ensuring pupils can identify links with prior units of work. They explained how marking gives them a challenge, and that they understand the links between scripture and the learning objective of the lesson. Behaviour for learning is consistently outstanding in all year groups, as pupils thoroughly enjoy religious education lessons, and are consistently positive about their learning. One Year 6 pupil stated that, 'RE is my favourite subject. I like how we get to learn about how the Bible can teach us through our lives.' Pupils speak passionately and confidently about their religious understanding, and talk about how they enjoy discussing and analysing scripture, showing high levels of religious literacy. Presentation of work in religious education is exceptional and is comparable to all other subjects.

All staff have a deep understanding of religious education, but are also willing to seek out and embrace support for their professional development. An example of this was the Year 6 teacher asking for guidance from the parish priest on the difficult theme of the last rites. There are clearly high expectations for all, and all pupils are allowed to shine, through careful scaffolding and creative, adaptive teaching. Evidence of skilful questioning was witnessed throughout school, leading to continuous assessment of pupils' understanding, thus maximising learning. Pupils in Nursery were able to link their behaviour to the lessons that Jesus taught. A variety of expression is evident through school, for example through art, drama and music, while pupils showed particularly high skills and joy inferring religious meaning from artwork. Rich relationships

between staff and pupils allow children to meaningfully reflect and review on their learning, with support staff skilfully working alongside colleagues to support the religious development of their pupils.

School leaders, including the religious education subject leader, are passionate about the impact of the subject on pupils, and they ensure parity to other curriculum subjects. They see religious education as the core of the core curriculum and the use of scripture as the, 'words that can transform our pupils' and families' lives'. They have high expectations in terms of pupil knowledge, skills and understanding. The subject leader shares with staff her inspiring vision for religious education to continually improve teaching and learning. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and development areas of the school. She is given regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate religious education in the school, through lesson drop ins, work scrutinies and discussions with pupils, as well as liaising with other schools in the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET). As teaching quality is monitored, staff receive regular and helpful feedback that contributes to the high outcomes for pupils. The subject leader for religious education has been highlighted by BHCET as a high-quality leader with opportunities to share her passion and drive for the subject. Governors understand the quality of religious education in school through feedback from leaders, and have had opportunities to monitor through visits and discussions with appropriate stakeholders.

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

Prayer and liturgy at St Bede's reflects a school enriched by prayer. Pupils participate passionately and enthusiastically in all aspects of prayer and worship, including joyful singing, but are also able to quietly reflect in their time of prayer and meditation. They demonstrate confidence and are able to clearly speak about ways in which prayer and liturgy can transform and enhance their lives. One pupil in Year 3 stated that, 'celebration of the word makes me excited about the rest of the week and how I can share the mission with all of my friends.' Parents also expressed how their own children reflected the rich experiences of prayer and liturgy whilst in the home, including sharing learned prayers with younger siblings. The diverse and rich cultural experiences of families are promoted within worship, giving pupils a real sense of self-worth, including in the use of resources that reflect the varied backgrounds and cultures within school. This was particularly evident in a celebration of the word for Pentecost, with paintings from various cultures showing the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles. Pupils confidently lead worship, including whole school Angelus, and have a solid understanding of the liturgical year and how it is expressed in prayer.

Prayer and liturgy at St Bede's is planned extremely well, ensuring fidelity to the liturgical year. Pupils could talk about the importance of liturgical colours. Spirituality is at the core of the school's mission, reflected in inspiring sacred spaces, including the wonderful prayer garden and altar. Pupils are encouraged to engage with these spaces and the opportunities that they afford for their individual spiritual reflection. Pupils want to and seek out these spaces during their own time. Key Stage 2 pupils spontaneously use the prayer garden to share their faith, using the story of the Prodigal Son as a basis for their celebration. Music and resources are chosen carefully to reflect the riches of the Church and its community and support the pupils in their reverence during times of prayer. Staff at all levels are skilled in leading prayer, and this is actively promoted

by the school leadership team. Families of pupils and parish are regularly welcomed into school to share prayer with their children, and this is a highly valued opportunity to celebrate together. The parish priest shared his views that the school has greatly enhanced the relationships with the parish, and this has resulted in increased numbers attending Mass on a weekly basis. Opportunities for creative and spontaneous prayer have been identified as an area of focus within school improvement, but these actions are not yet embedded.

There is a clear, well-formulated policy and plan for prayer and liturgy. Leaders recognise how prayer evolves through age appropriate participation and expectations, and allows pupils to express themselves and mature in their understanding of prayer. This means that older pupils have progressively built up the skills to plan, lead and take part in worship. Leaders have worked hard, engaging closely with families and clergy, to increase the participation in significant feast days and religious occasions, such as First Holy Communion, which are celebrated throughout the year. Quality and considered resourcing enhance the positive impact of prayer and liturgy, and contributes to creating strong liturgical experiences for pupils. Leaders have ensured that prayer spaces also reflect the wide range of cultures, customs and religions throughout the school. Governors value the importance placed upon the centrality of worship within school, and join with the school family at all appropriate opportunities. The headteacher keeps governors and BHCET aware of all school self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	140442
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8083317
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic Academy, Green Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0DW
School phone number	01642678071
Headteacher	Bernadette Rizzie-Allan (Headteacher)
Chair of local governing body	Stephen Holce
School Website	https://stbedesstockton.bhcet.org.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth 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	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Paul Craig
Allyson Thorpe

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