

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: Saint Bede's Catholic High School

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School URN: 119788

Headteacher: Mr Phil Grice

Chair of Governors: Mr Bill Drake

Inspectors: Anthony J Finnerty and Paul Wawszczyk

Date of Inspection: 9th & 10th May 2011

The inspection report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Michael Campbell O.S.A., the Bishop of Lancaster (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Saint Bede's is a smaller than average high school in Lytham. It has specialist status in Business and Enterprise and in Modern Foreign Languages. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students on free school meals is significantly below average as is the proportion with special educational needs or disabilities. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

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| Number of pupils on roll: | 733 |
| Planned Admission Number of Pupils: | 155 |
| Percentage of pupils baptised RC: | 86.9% |
| Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: | 10.8% |
| Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: | 00.7% |
| Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: | 01.6% |
| Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: | 04.5% |
| Percentage of pupils with special needs: | 03.5% |

Staffing

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| Full time teachers: | 42 |
| Part time teachers: | 7 |
| Percentage of Catholic teachers: | 46.5% |

RE Department Staffing:

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| Number of full time RE teachers: | 3 |
| Number of part time RE teachers: | 2 |
| Percentage of Catholic teachers: | 100% |
| Percentage of teachers with CCRS: | 80% |

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

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| Yr 7 | 8% | Yr 10 | 10% |
| Yr 8 | 8% | Yr 11 | 10% |
| Yr 9 | 8% | | |

Catholic Primary schools served by the school:

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|--------------------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Our Lady Star of the Sea | 159 | St. Peter | 139 |
| The Willows | 105 | Holy Family | 71 |
| St. Joseph | 30 | | |

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

Saint Bede's has a unique and welcoming atmosphere. The pupils are supported and encouraged by staff to make it an outstanding Catholic school. An ethos has been generated so that when they come to the school pupils are drawn in to a positive and happy learning community. The strength of relationships across age and ability groups, the mutual care between pupils and their desire to 'be the best they can be' all help to create a welcoming and safe community which celebrates Christian values. As one person observed "there is something in the spirit of these young people that makes the difference..." The first aim of the Mission Statement has been achieved; this school is a vibrant, happy community of faith.

The standards achieved by pupils at each key stage are good and have shown that pupils gain knowledge and understanding of religion and some are able to reflect on what the insights of religion can offer them in terms of the search for meaning and fulfilment. There is a full understanding of strengths and areas for development regarding Religious Education at Saint Bede's. The department has been well steered and served over the past several years and is now poised for a new and exciting move forward.

The school has strong leadership which is devolved to different levels. The Headteacher and his team of Senior Leaders are keen to proclaim the Catholic identity of the school and to promote Christian values in all aspects of the school's life. The leaders are loyal, skilled and hard working. Responsibility is devolved amongst the senior leaders, and a strong sense of 'ownership' is growing. This emerging collegial style is expected to ensure that high quality leadership in the school will be sustained.

The provision for Catholic education is good. The Religious Education department is well resourced: a suite of teaching rooms, a strong team of teachers, and unequivocal support from the senior leadership, all show

that the Religious Education of pupils at Saint Bede's is a priority. The chaplaincy is a very positive element in the provision and is strongly appreciated and valued by the community.

The school's capacity to improve is outstanding. Governors, staff and pupils are united in their desire to improve and develop their school to become consistently and securely outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Provide ongoing formation for staff concerning the character and the centrality of prayer in the Catholic tradition so that they can deepen and further enrich the prayer life of the school.
- Develop systems of assessment for learning which are applied consistently and systematically in Religious Education and across the school to ensure that pupils of all groups are effectively served and can become independent learners.
- Further evolve the Religious Education programme by developing learning around concepts of stewardship and inter-faith dialogue.
- Develop a programme of retreats throughout the school aimed at developing pupils' skills in preparing and leading Collective Worship.

PUPILS

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups?

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Learning in the school is good at both key stages with correspondingly good outcomes in progress and attainment. Students are keen to succeed and improve. Lessons are enjoyable, and manifest positive relationships and excellent behaviour. The use of assessment for learning is not yet as fully deployed, or as effectively used, as it might be but the department is keen to continue improvement in this regard.

Pupils at Key Stage 4 [GCSE Religious Studies] achieved less well than expected in 2010 compared with the previous year although the 3 year averages are creditable – 22.3% for A/A*, A*-C 80.2% and 99.2% A*-G generally reflecting school progress. Better provision needs to be made to

increase A* and A grades at Key Stage 4 to ensure parity with national and school statistics in the best performing subjects. Ensuring consistency in quality of marking will help the attainment of this objective.

Gender differences at Key Stage 4 show girls slightly outperforming boys but this is in line with school and national figures. SEN pupils are provided for by a strong department and committed staff and most meet their targets in Religious Education; the small numbers in the ethnic category and those on FSM similarly reach their targets in the majority of cases.

Outcomes are good at Key Stage 3 with above average attainments; the large majority of pupils (about 95%) are attaining Level 5+. More Level 7s will be attainable if Year 9 results are not aggregated with the rest of Key Stage 3 figures.

Pupils at Saint Bede's have a positive regard for Religious Education. A range of strategies (such as the use of Reward Stamps and the awarding of badges), used in the school and in the department, develop self-esteem, improve progress and lead to achievement that is good at each key stage. Pupils throughout the school gain sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the Catholic tradition. Knowledge regarding world religions and the teaching of the Church on inter-faith dialogue are areas currently being further developed.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They benefit in very positive ways by being at Saint Bede's. Pupils feel they belong to the school and it belongs to them: "it's like a big family here. We all know each other." They are aware of the core values and teachings of Christianity and there is strong support for Catholic practices and worship. Care and concern for each other and for staff are apparent in behaviour in school. Students share the 'Being a Bede' concept which is the school's way of articulating and living the vision unique to this Catholic school. The Chaplaincy is well used and accessed by students. Pupils support a variety of charities to assist those in need at home and abroad and help run groups such as the SVP, Fairtrade and CAFOD. Students are also committed to furthering the message of sustainability and care for creation, a dimension of Christian ethics which is unusually well developed at Saint Bede's.

The participation of pupils in Collective Worship is good with some very strong features. Reverence and confidence in prayer is displayed and some pupils assist in these situations. A daily prayer schedule is assigned to classes throughout the school. Plans to develop the skills of leadership

in prayer and worship amongst the pupils are rightly identified in the school SEF 48. Pupils are aware of the seasons and feasts through the programme of assemblies and liturgical events which is provided. The chapel is an appealing focus for prayer and reflection and attracts a faithful number to its weekly Eucharist. Annual Masses and services such as crib reflections, the Year 11 leavers' liturgy and the Ash Wednesday service are appreciated by pupils.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?

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Outstanding leadership and management is evident in this Catholic school; it ensures that the school is explicit in its mission. The senior leaders articulate the vision and mission of a Catholic school with confidence. Strong roles in leadership are played at all levels of the community. The role of the different councils, especially the Student Council, demonstrates the developing responsibility of the pupils regarding the life of the school. Increasingly rigorous use of data, improvement strategies, analysis of student achievement and creative initiatives ensure positive, and constantly improving, outcomes for pupils. The Behaviour for Learning policy has been very successful. The concept of 'Being a Bede' has become embedded in the school and has further enhanced a positive culture.

Self-evaluation is coherent and informed by a robust analysis of GCSE and progress data. As a result outcomes in Religious Education and well being for most pupils are good and for some they are very high. A good standard of teaching is maintained in all areas. Pupils and students express great satisfaction with the support available to them.

High levels of loyalty, commitment and service characterise the governing body; this is exemplified by the long serving chair of governors. The governing body fulfils its statutory and canonical responsibilities and provides leaders and managers with consistent support. Governors were not fully involved in the completion of the Section 48 self-evaluation form (SEF 48) but are kept fully informed of the progress of the school. Close and honest working relationships with senior leaders enable governors to identify the school's strengths and its areas for development. Systems to seek the views of parents, students and staff help to inform their decision-making. The relationship with parents is cultivated in line with

the Church's understanding of the primary role of parents in their children's education.

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting Catholic learning and well-being is outstanding. Links with feeder primary schools and with Cardinal Newman College are encouraged through transition arrangements and contacts. Links with local parishes are good and pupils participate in particular activities in some of these churches. School groups, such as the SVP, Fairtrade and CAFOD, foster wider partnerships. This is also done through support for charities such as Age Concern, Vincent House and Harbour House. The school also has strong and effective links with external agencies such as Connexions and Social Services; some of these organisations provide speakers for Challenge Weeks and for the PSHE/Citizenship programme which is actively engaged in providing opportunities for pupils to help the needy at home and abroad.

The contribution of leaders and managers towards promoting community cohesion is outstanding. Within school there is concern, respect and hospitality towards others. The RE and Citizenship curriculum fosters mutual understanding and integrity and respect for all. Its link with the Lancashire Cohesion and Equality team has led to pairing with a school in Burnley thus developing skills for dialogue and collaboration with pupils who hold different beliefs and values; an opportunity not arising from the makeup of Saint Bede's itself. In addition, Saint Bede's innovative work on sustainability including its allotment project has promoted strong links with local, national and global partners.

PROVISION

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

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The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good. Teachers are suitably qualified and have very good relationships with their classes. The majority of teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Students are keen to engage and to concentrate in lessons; and the quality of their work reflects good standards of learning. A range of teaching styles and strategies are evident in the classroom. There are good examples of dialogue and of questioning techniques, which contribute to the building of learning.

Peer-assessment and self-assessment are both well developed within the department. Formative assessment methods, however, are not yet

employed with consistency and greater rigour in marking is desirable. Guidance on how to improve is uneven, but the school and the department do set challenging targets and seek to get the best from the students. Pupil evaluations are used to inform planning.

The Religious Education curriculum contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of young people at Saint Bede's. It is valued by pupils, by staff and by senior leaders. The teachers are well regarded; a sentiment expressed by several pupils was: "teachers support you, they make this a great place to be". Lesson plans are realistic and new approaches are explored. Extra-curricular activities and initiatives such as the Philosophy Club, the Mini Vinnies, Positive Pupils and Castlerigg Manor retreats are led or supported by the department. The demands of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales regarding the specific provision of appropriate curriculum time for Religious Education have not been met in Key Stage 3.

At Saint Bede's the place of prayer and Collective Worship is significant and well resourced. A beautiful chapel and a prayer garden have been established with care and integrity. The presence of a lay chaplain and the good relations with local parish priests as well as the work of a priest chaplain, who visits the school weekly, all testify to a strong provision. The staff and the young people of Saint Bede's are well served.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

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| Overall effectiveness | 1 |
| The school's capacity for sustained improvement | 1 |
| How good are outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups? | 2 |
| • how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education? | 2 |
| ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| ❖ pupils' attainment in RE | 2 |
| • to what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school? | 1 |
| • how well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship? | 2 |
| How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School? | 1 |
| • how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils? | 1 |
| • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils? | 1 |
| • the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met? | 2 |
| • how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being? | 1 |
| • how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion. | 1 |
| How effective is the provision for Catholic Education? | 1 |
| • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education? | 2 |
| • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education? | 2 |
| • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs? | 1 |
| • the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school? | 1 |