



St Bede's RCVA Primary School

Front Street, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6AB

School Unique Reference Number: **114243**

Inspection dates:	20 – 21 November 2019
Lead inspector:	Andy Ramanandi

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Bede's RCVA Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Bede's is a warm and family-orientated school, greatly valued by the pupils, parents and parishioners it serves. It is an oasis of calm where children are able to develop their faith and their sense of moral and ethical purpose.
- Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and can explain why they are so valuable to them. They make good, steady progress over time.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors and staff have very high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission of the school and work effectively together to achieve this.
- Collective Worship at St Bede's is outstanding. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship across the school. Worship is a key part of all school celebrations and is highly valued by the whole school community. Leaders excel in the promotion of high quality Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is a smaller than average sized primary school
- An overwhelming majority of the pupils are of white British heritage
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in receipt of pupil premium is slightly below average
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average
- 58% pupils are baptised Catholics, 24% are from other Christian denominations
- The school serves the parish of St Bede's, Sacriston

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve teaching in Religious Education by:
 - extending the successful model of staff collaboration, ensuring the best examples of effective practice and feedback are shared with all staff.
- Further improve teaching in Religious Education by:
 - embedding the age related standards and using them to ensure good progress in Religious Education over time.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of St Bede's and benefit greatly from it.
- Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their school family and parents comment that in the school, 'the sense of community is a strength and Gospel values are seen in action'.
- The Catholic ethos is tangible throughout the school. Pupils wholeheartedly appreciate, value and participate in the Catholic Life of the school with the mission statement, 'to lead children to the place within them only God can fill', central to the daily routines.
- Pupils evaluate their input into the Catholic Life of the school and the impact of their actions on their community regularly. Pupils say they feel valued and very confidently express their ideas and feelings; their voice is heard.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth, demonstrating exemplary behaviour towards adults and each other. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of how they live their lives and how they treat others.
- There are very strong parish links. Pupils worship with parishioners regularly in the parish church. They are able to extend their relationship with the local community, particularly through the actions of the Mini Vinnies and the Religious Education ambassadors.
- Pupils willingly and eagerly take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school and value the opportunities they are given to be active citizens as evidenced by their Silver UNICEF Rights Respecting School award.
- Pupils confidently talk about the various causes they support, effectively promoting the Catholic character of the school, such as CAFOD, The People's Kitchen, the local food bank and Sacriston in Bloom. They are especially energised by 'Laudato Si' and are passionate about improving the world.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- St Bede's is a school committed to its Catholic tradition and ethos. This is evident, not only in the creative displays and sacred spaces featured around the school, but also in the personal development of pupils and staff.
- Excellent relationships exist within the school community with all stakeholders fully committed to making the school the best that it can be. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are all encouraged to be involved in school life and communication is a strength of the school.
- Parents comment that, 'the family nature of St Bede's goes beyond the school gates and into the wider community'. There is a strong sense of family and parents take advantage of the many opportunities to worship and pray with their children.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place which are carefully planned to reflect the Catholic Life of the school for both pupils and staff. They provide high levels of support for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- High expectations of behaviour are promoted by staff and pupils alike. This is especially seen in the buddy system where year 6 and reception pupils are paired to support each other.
- Pupils are clearly supported throughout school by a range of pastoral opportunities provided by the school including the very well-embedded house point system. All staff play their part and everyone is valued for their contribution.
- The school takes full advantage of the Church's seasons, as well as local and national initiatives, to seize every opportunity to help others.
- The relationships and sex education programme is well established and delivered effectively at age appropriate levels following Journey in Love.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and managers throughout the school are instrumental in ensuring that the Church's mission in education is lived and breathed by all connected with the school. They have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the Church. This is an outward looking school.
- Governors are active within the school community and fully participate in the Catholic Life of the school. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school and work very effectively with the headteacher.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and parish priest are excellent role models. They are motivated and enthusiastic about the journey that the school is on. The impact of this leadership is evident across the school with staff and pupils mirroring the outstanding examples that have been given to them.
- The school has developed very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, who have a clear understanding of the school's mission.
- The Catholic Life of the school is monitored by all stakeholders on a regular basis to inform priorities and evaluate success. Governors are confident in holding the leadership team to account, whilst being actively involved in supporting its mission. The governors have real expertise and benefit from having a particularly effective link governor.

- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, gathered from a range of sources. It has clear links to the school improvement plan and is focused on improvements for pupil outcomes.
- The spirituality of staff is a priority and opportunities for the spiritual development of all staff are provided through regular prayer opportunities and regular retreats.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Pupils make good progress in Religious Education considering their differing starting points.
- The quality of pupils' current work is good. All pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils told us during the inspection that they enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to develop as competent learners. During one lesson observed, pupils seized opportunities to link areas studied to appropriate articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Pupils are religiously literate and they use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and to think ethically. As a consequence, all pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education because, 'it is challenging' and they are, 'inspired to learn about God'.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good because most pupils enjoy Religious Education.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement in Religious Education lessons and, as a result, pupils concentrate well.
- Teaching of Religious Education is good with some outstanding practice seen. Where teaching is best, teachers plan creatively, use a range of resources to inspire and motivate pupils and use their strong subject knowledge to skilfully question and challenge pupils to deepen their understanding. To further improve the teaching in Religious Education this needs to be extended across school.
- The school has just begun using the age related standards in Religious Education. Staff are working collaboratively, in phases, to embed these as a way of ensuring good progress. They are taking advantage of the recently appointed deputy headteacher's experience in using age related standards. To further improve the teaching in Religious Education the use of these needs to become embedded.
- Religious Education is given high importance. Success is celebrated through the whole school house system and the sharing of work with senior leaders, parents and through whole school displays.

- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- The headteacher is inspirational and supports the whole school community. She demonstrates a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve.
- The skills of the dedicated Religious Education coordinator are clearly seen in the accurate records of lesson observations, analysis of data and the monitoring of pupils' work in all classes across the school.
- The coordinator attends all diocesan training to ensure that cross moderation is verified. These sessions are then disseminated back to the staff in school-based curriculum professional development. She also moderates within her local cluster to further secure judgements.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated regularly, and all staff are kept very well informed about the priorities in Religious Education. Leaders use their findings effectively to promote improvement.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well informed by best practice in Religious Education.
- Governors are regular visitors to school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are very knowledgeable about the many strengths in Religious Education at St Bede's as well as the areas for improvement. Their diverse backgrounds enable them to be extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge when appropriate.
- Leaders ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is at the heart of this school and the pupils value it. Children are reverent and participate enthusiastically. There is a calm and peaceful ethos throughout the school and this is reflected in the pupils' behaviour and consideration for each other.
- Pupils are confident in planning and leading Collective Worship using a variety of styles and resources reflecting the liturgical year. They are able to talk knowledgeably about the variety of prayers and liturgies that take place.
- Pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.
- Adults are excellent role models for pupils in their response and participation in liturgy and this is evident when pupils lead their own liturgies.
- Pupils confirm that meditation sessions enable them to reflect in a calm and quiet spiritual environment. Pupils enjoy using the Peace Garden as a quiet space to pray and also a sacred place for them to develop their liturgies and Collective Worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship; it is carefully considered, richly resourced and is central to everyday life at St Bede's.
- There are a rich variety of different forms of worship evident throughout the school. In all areas of the school there are references to prayer and the prayer garden is a designated space for pupils to gather together for worship and personal prayer.
- The prayer life of the school is rich and varied. Staff are highly skilled in leading Collective Worship and enabling pupils to plan and lead Collective Worship.
- There is a comprehensive timetable for Collective Worship. Parents, parishioners and governors value the many and varied invitations to be part of this worshipping community.
- The Catholic values of the school are given the highest priority and are embedded in the daily life of St Bede's. This small family school is very outward looking and Collective Worship underpins this. Pupils and staff are enthused with a tangible sense of mission. As a consequence of their worshipping experience they are driven

to put their faith into action.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The headteacher leads by example, modelling inspirational Collective Worship which is rooted in the liturgical calendar whilst making experiences relevant to pupils in a contemporary context.
- She sets an excellent example to pupils and staff ensuring that they develop a deepening appreciation of the Church's traditions, rites and symbols. Prayerful, reflective opportunities contribute to the spiritual formation of pupils and staff.
- The governors have invested resources to support spiritual development across school, empowering the Religious Education coordinator to make sure Collective Worship has the highest priority. Leaders are passionate that liturgical and spiritual development are priorities for all in school and that time is devoted to this. This is evident in the provision for staff and the variety of opportunities offered to pupils.
- Leaders regularly review Collective Worship throughout the school. They seek the views of pupils and parents through the use of questionnaires and feedback. Pupil, staff and parent responses are very enthusiastic about their positive experiences and of the school.
- The headteacher has a very visible presence in school and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship through both formal and informal monitoring. Effective evaluation of staff strengths has resulted in a successful continuing professional development programme for all staff.
- There is clear evidence of the quality of Collective Worship being monitored and evaluated. It is given a high priority by all leaders and active involvement by governors ensures they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in Collective Worship.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for 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.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Bede's RCVA Primary School
Unique reference number	114243
Local authority	Durham
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Robert Byrne CO the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Michael Fingleton
Headteacher	Eve Alderson
Date of previous school inspection	January 2015
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