



DIOCESE OF  
**SHREWSBURY**

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DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT:

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

School: St Bede's Catholic Primary School  
Address: Keepers Lane  
Weaverham  
Cheshire  
CW8 3BY

Tel No: 01606 852149

URN: 111341

Headteacher: Mrs L Conlon

Chair of Governors: Mr C Lawton

Date of Inspection: 27 June 2019

Inspectors: Mrs E Robb  
Mr K Platt  
Mrs L Kelly (shadowing)

## MISSION STATEMENT

### ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

*Our purpose is to develop learning in a Christian, caring environment and to promote the Catholic faith.*

*Inspiring independent learners with Jesus by our side*

## OUR CORE VALUES

*Pride ~ Respect ~ Responsibility ~ Challenge ~ Curiosity*

Our aim is:

- ◆ To **enable** everyone within the school to develop their full potential - spiritually, academically, socially and physically.
- ◆ To **provide** a high quality education which promotes the most desirable attitudes, values, skills and understanding.
- ◆ To **foster** the Catholic faith of the school community through prayer, worship and liturgy and to encourage and develop links with the family and the parish.
- ◆ To **promote** moral issues - justice, care, forgiveness, respect, self-discipline and to value the importance of relationships both within school and in the wider community.
- ◆ To **promote** equal opportunities by acknowledging and respecting the needs of individual children and by celebrating their achievements.
- ◆ To **maintain** school improvement through critical appraisal and the pursuit of challenging targets.

**SCHOOL: ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**DATE OF LAST INSPECTION: 8<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014**

**JUDGEMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION: OUTSTANDING**

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION**

No areas for development identified in Monitoring Report for Outstanding Schools  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**PROGRESS MADE WITH AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PREVIOUS  
INSPECTION**

Although no actions were identified from the Monitoring Report visit in 2014, the Headteacher, who was appointed in 2015, identified key areas for development which informed the Religious Education Action plan. Consequently the school continues to make excellent progress.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

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**This is an outstanding Catholic school.**

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

**Summary of key findings:**

- St Bede's is an outstanding, happy school where Gospel values are woven into the fabric of the school.
- The inspirational Headteacher is deeply committed and passionate about the Catholic life of the school and is determined to provide the best possible Catholic Education for all pupils.
- She is strongly supported in this quest by the Religious Education Co-ordinator, all Staff and Governors, who continually work very hard to maintain the very high standards in this outstanding school.
- The Governors are well informed, very supportive and visible around the school.
- Parents are kept well informed about the Catholic life of the school and are extremely supportive of all the school strives to achieve.
- The pupils are delightful and their behaviour is outstanding. They are fine ambassadors for their school. They show high levels of religious literacy and they make excellent progress throughout their school journey. They enjoy their Religious Education lessons.
- Collective Worship at all levels is outstanding and pupils are highly effective in preparing and leading Acts of Collective Worship.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging in the school.
- The school has a strong relationship with the Diocese.
- The creative approach to teaching Religious Education is a strength of the school.
- The Parish Priest, the Parish Sister and the Deacon provide excellent support.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

Areas for development have already been identified by the Headteacher after each section in the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form for Denominational Inspection; however the following two suggestions may be helpful.

- To continue to develop the leadership capacity in Religious Education within the school through modelling and Continuous Professional Development.
- To continue to share outstanding practice within school in order to maintain outstanding status.

## Information about the Inspection

The Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Shrewsbury Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Denominational Inspections approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- 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 pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors and a shadowing inspector over one day.

- Three Acts of Worship were observed: FS2 teacher led, Y6 pupil led and Headteacher led Collective Worship in main hall for Y1-Y5.
- Lesson observations throughout the school.

- Discussions with Headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator, Chair of Governors, Parish Priest who is also a Governor, Parish Sister, Newly Qualified Teacher.
- General conversations with Staff encountered on tour of school and throughout the day.
- Conversations with representative group of pupils.
- A representative sample of pupils' Religious Education books, Collective Worship Workbooks and Homework books were scrutinised along with Religious Education file.
- The schools website was checked for further evidence.
- A wide range of documents were made available and scrutinised , including the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form (forwarded to Inspectors prior to the Inspection), Religious Education Action Plans, School Development Plan, attainment and progress data, school policies, Governors' file, parent, staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Tracking data, displays around the school and classrooms also provided information.

### **Information about this school**

- St Bede's is a single form Catholic Primary School in Weaverham, a small village on the outskirts of Northwich.
- The pupil admission number is 30, there are currently 197 pupils on roll, 83.5% are baptised Catholics.
- A small percentage have English as an additional language.
- The current Headteacher was appointed in March 2015.
- The Headteacher is the Religious Education Co-ordinator and is supporting a member of Staff to take on this role.
- A new Chair of Governors was also appointed in 2015.
- Staff includes a full time equivalent of 8 teachers, 55% of teaching staff are Catholics and almost 55% of teachers have CCRS or equivalent. There are 8 teaching support assistants.

## Full report – inspection judgments

### CATHOLIC LIFE

**The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

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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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- The pupils in this school value and participate fully in the Catholic life of the school. They know the Vision Mission Values (VMV) and understand how these can help them to develop further their relationship with God. They are confident and willing to participate in and volunteer for planned liturgies and events. Their comments and ideas through Pupil Voice are listened to and acted upon appropriately.
- The pupils' behaviour is excellent as witnessed by the Inspectors, generally throughout the school as well as in lessons and Acts of Collective Worship.
- The pupils are very keen to talk about the importance of the impact of their fundraising activities. They are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and show empathy as well as generosity in the way they approach this aspect of the Catholic life of the school. The Mini Vinnies are a great example of the way in which the pupils approach all activities relating to giving and prayer. One pupil commented, (the school) "may be small but it can hold really big things".
- There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in this school. The pupils show excellent attitudes towards each other. They are very caring and celebrate the success of others willingly. The older pupils are excellent role models for the younger pupils.
- The relationships between adults and pupils are equally respectful. It is very apparent that the teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and other adults are fully committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for all pupils in an environment of trust and Gospel values.
- The pupils are true ambassadors of their Mission Statement, "*ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER, Inspiring independent learners with Jesus by our side*".
- The Mission Statement underpins all the school sets out to achieve. There is a general understanding of how this guides the work of the school. This is further evidenced in the high quality of relationships throughout the school. Responses to the pupil, staff and parent questionnaires fully support this.
- There are exciting and stimulating displays throughout the school which celebrate and promote the Catholic character of the school as well as celebrate the pupils' hard work.
- The pupils speak confidently and respectfully about their faith and are developing a rich religious literacy.
- All Staff understand the principles of Social Catholic Teaching which is woven into the daily practice of school life, resulting in excellent pastoral care provision for pupils and staff.

- The Parish Priest, who is also a Governor, is very proud of all the success of pupils in this school, and is a great support for the Headteacher, The Religious Education Co-ordinator, and is always available to assist in whatever way he can.
- The Parish Sister is a regular visitor and helps school through support for Mini Vinnies, helping with the First Sacrament preparations and meeting these pupils' parents, as well as being a "friend of the school".
- Leaders and Governors are fully committed to the Church's mission in education and are dedicated to, and determined for St Bede's Catholic Primary School to be the best it can be.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous, challenging and accurate in determining ways forward.
- Governors are involved in scheduled monitoring activities which increase further the understanding of quality first provision.
- There are regular scheduled meetings with the Chair of Governors who provides support and challenge for the Headteacher. He is kept well informed about school life, has the highest regard for the Headteacher, Staff and pupils and sees the school as "all encompassing" of the Catholic life and ethos.
- There is a great emphasis on Continuous Professional Development for all staff, which is provided by the Diocese, or outside providers or in-house training.
- Staff morale is high, and they clearly support each other. They feel valued and are committed to provide the best opportunities for all pupils within the context of Social Catholic Teaching, knowing that they have the support and confidence of leaders, managers and governors.
- There are good supportive induction procedures in place for new Staff as experienced by a recently appointed Newly Qualified Teacher.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school as indicated in the responses to the questionnaires.

For example, some of the parents' comments,

*"I am extremely proud to be a parent of St Bede's"*

*"...the welcome in school is a huge strength; it feels like a Church family"*

Another parent commented on how appreciative she was after the wonderful Anglo/Italian exchange trip and, *"the positive impact this had on the pupils"*.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Religious Education is outstanding

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- Pupils make excellent progress from their different starting points and the outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are high.
- Staff ensure that provision matches the needs of all pupils. Differentiation is used to excellent effect.
- During the lessons observed all pupils were actively engaged, the more able challenged and support was provided when needed.
- The pupils thoroughly enjoy their Religious Education lessons and also enjoy the variety of ways in which Religious Education lessons are delivered, for example, through role play and drama.
- One pupil commented, "*We don't just do writing, we can act, colour and do drama*" and another pupil remarked, "*It's a really good school and we get well educated.*"
- Behaviour in all lessons observed was outstanding. The pupils were keen and eager to learn about all aspects of their religious lessons and it is apparent that the pupils are becoming religiously literate.
- As a result of the provision offered throughout the school, the older children can reflect deeply and spiritually on issues discussed in their lessons. They participate in deep conversations with each other demonstrating excellent subject knowledge, and how this impacts on their ability to think ethically and reflect theologically.
- From Early Years to Year 6 all teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They are confident of their subject knowledge and use a range of strategies, for example, skilful questioning, to extend further their pupils' understanding and knowledge. Teaching Assistants enhance the learning of Religious Education through the sensitive way in which tasks are adapted to meet the needs of pupils.
- Clear planning and a wide range of teaching styles deliver engaging and interactive learning opportunities for all pupils, and as a result most teaching is outstanding and never less than good.
- The positive impact of the Continuous Professional Development in Creativity is clearly evident and contributes to the high quality teaching and learning in lessons.
- Provision for Religious Education is delivered through The Way, the Truth and the Life. In order to enrich the pupils' experience further, for example, guest speakers were invited in to school to talk about their involvement in charities, and their work with those in need. The pupils were able to ask searching questions, thus developing depth of understanding of what happens in the real world, and how they can respond through actions and prayer.

- Feedback to pupils in Religious Education is of a high standard and pupils are given time to respond to comments or questions raised by their teachers. These focus on the learning objectives, “I can” statements and driver words. The older children are learning how to organise their responses in order to achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Leaders and Governors fully comply with the Bishops’ Conference Requirements and Religious Education is very well resourced, given parity with other core curriculum subjects and at least 10% of the timetable is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education across all year groups.
- The school leadership and Governors ensure that all staff are supported to attend Continuous Development Courses, and there are opportunities for peer coaching.
- Governors take a strategic role in developing the provision of Religious Education. The Parish Priest, who is also a Governor, regularly attends meetings to discuss liturgy and reflections for all year groups.
- Rigorous tracking and assessment of individual pupils is carried out regularly, and is analysed to identify trends of performance and areas for development.
- Governors are involved in the self-evaluation processes. They provide challenge as well as support; consequently, they have an accurate understanding of current standards.
- The Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator, Leaders and Governors, are fully committed to maintaining high quality and outstanding provision for all pupils.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**Collective Worship is outstanding.**

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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 governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- The quality of Collective Worship at all levels is outstanding and is central to the life of the school.
- There is a termly timetable which promotes a variety of Collective Worship experiences, such as whole school worship, class group worship and Key Stage worship.
- The pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's Liturgical Year, seasons and feast days.
- Staff are highly skilled in helping all pupils, from Early Years to Year 6, to plan and deliver quality Acts of Collective Worship through modelling and encouragement.
- From their earliest years pupils are involved in the planning of, preparation for and participation in Collective Worship. They are encouraged to choose appropriate artefacts, readings, music/songs for particular topics which contribute to their 'Going Forth' activity.
- The pupils Collective Worship Workbooks are of an excellent high standard and beautifully presented, and show examples of both adult and pupil led Collective Worship. These high expectations relating to the presentation and content in the Collective Worship books shows the significance placed on Collective Worship by the school community.
- As they move through the school the pupils develop in confidence, knowledge, understanding and purpose. The older children are challenged to think deeply and reflect on their experiences.
- Praying together or individually is a key element in the daily experience for all pupils and staff at St Bede's.
- During the three Acts of Worship observed the pupils' behaviour was excellent, their responses meaningful and relevant, and their attitude to prayer respectful and reverent.
- Groups of pupils have planned Collective Worship with other year groups, for example, Year 6 worked with Year 3, which gives the younger children opportunities to develop further their confidence in preparing and organising Collective Acts of Worship.
- The Parish Sister and Deacon enjoy visiting the school and are particularly impressed with the way in which the pupils praise God through their singing in the Laudate assembly.
- The pupils have a deep respect for pupils from other faiths which is reflected in the way they plan, prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.

- There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in Collective Worship. One particular way for pupils to experience Collective Worship at home with their families is through the provision of a Travelling Crib.
- The '*Statements to live by*' are shared at the start of each week. They are explored and discussed at an age appropriate level during Collective Worship.
- The pupils pray confidently with traditional and contemporary prayer. They are willing to say their own prayers spontaneously in small groups or during school Collective Worship.
- There are a range of experiences available for pupils which help them to deepen their faith through prayer and worship, for example, CAFOD Retreat days, Churches Together Events, liturgies in school and Church. The pupils also set up Advent and Lenten Prayer Trails in Church for the parishioners which the pupils lead. This enriches further the strong links with the parish and the school community.
- There are regular planning meetings with the Parish Priest and the Parish Sister to ensure that quality provision is maintained throughout the year. Governors attend Collective Worship often and are kept well informed about the school's provision both informally through discussion, and more formally through the Headteacher's Report to Governors.
- There are excellent resources available for staff and pupils, which are used effectively to produce high quality Acts of Collective Worship.
- There is a pupil led Lunchtime Prayer session which is always well attended and this is linked to the seasons - Rosary, Holy Souls, Advent and Lent. This is an example of pupils being good role models to other pupils by leading them in prayer and reflection.
- The Governors are proud of the standard of Collective Worship in the school as this underpins the school's mission and promotes the Gospel values.