

# St Bede's Catholic Primary School

URN: 141458

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Middlesbrough

05–06 February 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### 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

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## Compliance statement

- The school fully complies with the requirements for the provision of religious education determined by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is at the core of the curriculum and at least 10% of the timetable is allocated to it.
- The school fully complies with the requirements of the Bishop of Middlesbrough.
- The school has addressed the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection.

## What the school does well

- The mission of the school, 'Believe Achieve Serve' is deeply ingrained in every aspect of life at St. Bede's. Leaders, staff, and students embody gospel values with enthusiasm and dedication, fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and spiritually enriching Catholic community. This is a noteworthy and impressive achievement.
- Pastoral care is central to the school community, ensuring that every individual, including those with special educational needs and those facing challenging home circumstances, is valued, supported, and nurtured. Pupils and staff show care and empathy toward one another, consequently, behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.
- The school community is deeply committed to fostering a tangible culture of service, and the application of Catholic social teaching. Pupils engage in a range of initiatives that support the local community, demonstrating compassion, and a clear understanding of their responsibility to 'share God's light with others'.
- In all age groups pupils demonstrate secure prior knowledge. They say they enjoy their lessons and when given the opportunity they can show good levels of understanding, which they can apply to their lived experience. Progress is good for nearly all pupils, and attainment is above average.
- Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the school community, providing rich and meaningful opportunities to encounter God. A deep culture of prayer is woven into daily life, offering moments of reflection, worship, thanksgiving, and spiritual growth. Pupils and staff participate in a variety of liturgical celebrations, and singing is a particular strength.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that as pupils move through the school, they consistently build on the skills they have acquired and take an increasingly active role in shaping, leading, and evaluating acts of worship.
- Provide opportunities that allow all pupils to develop critical thinking skills, independence, the collaborative exploration of concepts, and individual creative expression.

## 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

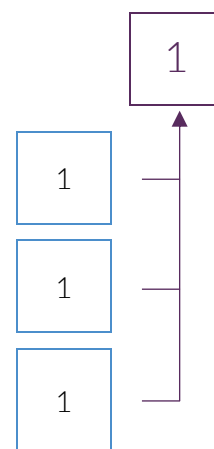
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



St Bede's school community embraces and actively lives out its Catholic mission, to 'Believe Achieve Serve'. Pupils have a clear sense of pride in their shared school values and understand that God loves them. There is a strong sense of purpose and commitment to their mission, but also to the 'Golden Rules' and Catholic social teaching. Pupils articulate a desire to serve others. One pupil stated that, 'Everything we do in school is because of Jesus'. They actively support charities such as Cafod, a local food bank, Butterwick Hospice, the Lifeboat Association, and the British Legion. Pupils understand the need to contribute to the common good and look after the world. The Eco Team have supported beach clean-up initiatives, planted bulbs and trees, and do their best to recycle and to reduce energy use. The Mini Vinnies work alongside the adult-led chaplaincy team to organise popular community activities in the parish, including a monthly Bede's Brunch. Pupils have deep respect for others, including those with other faiths. Behaviour is exemplary everywhere. Parents commented that the school's ethos has a positive impact on their home life. Another said, 'As parents we feel blessed that our children attend such a nurturing Catholic school'.

The mission of the school is at the centre of everything. It is well thought through, highly visible, and integrated effectively into every aspect of policy and practice. It is highly visible around school and staff and pupils actively work to achieve its objectives. Relationships are very positive, ensuring a supportive and welcoming atmosphere. The house system provides excellent opportunities for older and younger pupils to enjoy each other's company. Other cultures and belief traditions are valued and respected. Senior leaders provide exemplary role models in their relationships with the staff and their care for pupils. Adults in the school, including all support staff, demonstrate the highest levels of pastoral care, especially for the most vulnerable. This means that pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The school environment proclaims its Catholic identity and ethos. Everywhere you look, especially inside the building, there are reminders that God is close. A chaplaincy team, which includes members of the parish, work hard to celebrate

the mission of the school. The activities they organise, with support from pupils, are planned across the year and have a positive impact on both the parish and school. Engagement activities, such as the regular 'Starbooks' sessions for parents and parishioners are increasingly well attended. Relationships and health education have been appropriately implemented.

Leaders, supported by the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, have a clear Catholic vision, which they confidently articulate and promote. Their ambition ensures that the mission remains central to all decision-making, driving continuous improvement and deepening the school's Catholic identity. The school has a strong and mutually enriching relationship with the parish. Leaders, through the well-established chaplaincy team, ensure that pupils can actively participate in parish life, strengthening and deepening their experience of faith beyond the school, including with other schools and the Diocese. The parish clergy are highly valued contributors to the faith life of the school and pupils and staff appreciate their involvement and leadership. Leaders and staff value parents and carers as key partners in the spiritual and academic development of their children. The headteacher and her deputy are dedicated witnesses to the Gospel. They prioritise wellbeing for staff, who speak extremely positively about the way they are encouraged and supported. Governors are involved in the life of the school in numerous ways and are rigorous in their monitoring and ambition. Pupils participate indirectly in evaluating the faith life of the school.

# Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

## Religious education key judgement grade

### Pupil outcomes

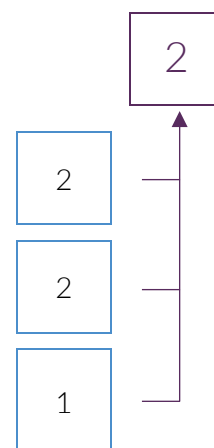
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

### 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



Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and engagement in religious education lessons, showing curiosity and a willingness to explore their faith. Most, including those who find learning more difficult, make good progress. They show secure levels of religious knowledge, appropriate to their age. Given their relative starting points, they progress well and attainment by the time they leave is above average. Teaching is never less than good and is sometimes outstanding. Pupils can speak with confidence and discuss their learning. Older pupils were asked to consider the contradictions between what God asks of them and what they sometimes observe in the outside world and on the news. In a younger class, pupils discussed their interpretations of the parable of the sower. One child stated, 'The seeds falling in rocky ground are people who don't listen to God.' Another younger pupil told the teacher, 'God does very good things to help people.' Pupils concentrate and their excellent behaviour enables an atmosphere of learning. Marking and feedback helps them to understand how well they have done. Opportunities are sometimes missed that would enable pupils to demonstrate independence, individuality and creativity. Consequently, deeper synthesizing of concepts and ideas can sometimes be limited.

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have appropriate professional development to enhance their skills. They value religious education as being at the core of the curriculum. The school is currently part of a piloting initiative for a revised scheme based on the new *Religious Education Directory* and teachers involved in this are very positive about it. Teaching support staff are excellent practitioners, providing skilled and genuine care for pupils, especially those with special needs. Work in books is generally presented well. In the most successful lessons teachers plan learning activities that allow pupils to reflect meaningfully on their beliefs, values, and previously acquired knowledge. Questioning and discussion in these lessons is focused, adaptive, and designed to accurately identify learning and progress. Appropriate to their age, they develop a strong and informed sense of right and wrong that influences their daily lives and interactions. Pupil effort is celebrated in class and in whole school settings, helping

to motivate and build confidence. Children speak enthusiastically about the certificates and rewards such as the Bede Bonus points. There is an over-reliance on published worksheets which can sometimes limit opportunities for extended writing, independent and individual thought, and creativity.

Religious education is prioritised as a core subject, with curriculum time, resources, and expectations aligned with those of other core subjects. Leaders have ensured that the subject is highly valued throughout the school. Consequently, pupils receive a quality experience that reflects its importance. The 'formidable' senior leaders share their experience and expertise with other schools across the Trust. They have made significant improvements in teaching and learning approaches in the last few years, and this work has been extremely successful. It is ensuring that teaching is always at least good and is sometimes outstanding. Professional development is thoughtfully planned and tailored to meet the needs of the staff, enabling them to build confident subject knowledge and skills. Leaders of religious education are committed to strengthening the subject and supporting staff in delivering engaging lessons. They have an increasingly clear understanding of what is working well and where further improvements can be made, ensuring the subject continues to evolve in a way that benefits pupils. Useful systems are in place that enable leaders to understand how the school is doing. When the results of these systems, such as external moderation minutes, are addressed, the school is able to identify how to make teaching even better.

## 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

2

1

Pupils respond positively to prayer experiences offered by the school. They are reflective, engaged, and enthusiastic. Prayer and reflection opportunities are woven into school life. They love singing, especially in whole school worship, alongside the choir. Some pupils are members of the Cathedral choir. They have a secure understanding of various prayer methods, including breathing prayers, mantras, meditation, lectio divina, journaling, and dance. They know the liturgical year and its seasonal colours. In several classes, pupils remarked, 'In Ordinary time we do extraordinary things.' A very young child told an inspector, 'I'm making special glasses so I can see the light of Jesus'. Older pupils support and sometimes lead school-wide celebrations and some serve at Mass. When they do this they do so with confidence. Parents mentioned their children's comfort and ease when discussing prayer at home. Pupils enjoy traditional Catholic activities like the rosary and May procession. Pupils connect their religious education with worship experiences, highlighting the relevance of faith in daily life. In a lower Key Stage 1 class, one child expressed a wish to pray for people in Ukraine, while another wrote a prayer, without prompting, for those who are sad, lonely, or sick. Older pupils and younger ones can plan, lead, and evaluate class prayers with some adult support, though this varies by class.

Prayer and worship are integral to the school's daily routine, reflecting the richness of Catholic tradition. There is a wide variety of prayer and worship experiences offered to pupils. The use of scripture is also a strong aspect of worship provision. Pupils at all ages are consistently encountering relevant, and appropriate texts from the Bible. Staff actively lead and support collective worship, creating an engaging atmosphere that reflects the school's mission. Their dedication encourages pupils to participate sincerely and respectfully. While some pupils are confident in planning, leading, and evaluating prayer and liturgy, progress acquiring these skills varies across different year groups. There are numerous prayer spaces and displays celebrating the school's values and mission, in classrooms and other parts of the building such as the hall and main entrance. Whilst there is already a small prayer garden, a new covered prayer space in the grounds is currently being constructed. Mass is held at the parish church or school on feast

days. Established liturgies for Advent, Lent, and Remembrance are appreciated by parents and parishioners.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and all other members of the chaplaincy team, have ensured that the school calendar includes the celebration of sacraments, holy days of obligation, and other significant events in the Church's year, as well as important moments within the school community. Activities that pupils particularly enjoy include visits to the church, Marian liturgies, and the half-termly school Mass, which families are especially encouraged to attend, and many do. The school works closely with parish catechists and parents to provide effective sacramental preparation for pupils. Teachers value the training they have undertaken, delivered by the Trust and senior leaders. This is having a tangible impact across the school and is especially appreciated by teachers who are keen to make worship meaningful, varied and appropriate. Resources for worship, including sacred spaces, liturgical items, and prayer materials, are well used to enhance the spiritual life of the school. Leaders have made sure that expenditure on resources is a priority. The views of pupils are included in the planning of prayer and worship activities. The school has established a comprehensive policy for prayer and worship, outlining a systematic approach to developing participation skills as pupils get older. However, the policy is not yet applied consistently across all classes.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	141458
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8073307
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Redcar Road, Marske-by-Sea, Redcar, TS11 6AE
School phone number	01642485217
Headteacher	Lucy Smith
Chair of local governing body	Sarah Brady
School Website	<a href="https://stbedes.npcat.org.uk">https://stbedes.npcat.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy 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	June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Mark Brennan (Diocese of Leeds)	Lead
Rachel Snowdon Poole (Diocese of Nottingham)	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