

# St Bede's Catholic Primary School

URN: 111341

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

21–22 January 2026

## 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

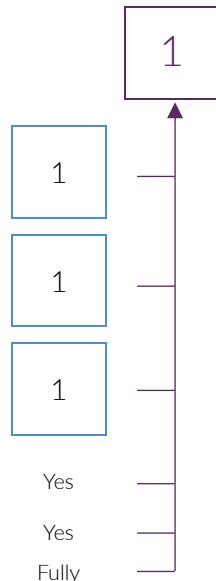
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- The school is compliant with the general norms for religious education and the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

## What the school does well

- Leadership of Catholic life and mission, religious education and collective worship is outstanding because of the subject leader's expertise and authentic commitment to Catholic education.
- Teachers' confidence and knowledge of the *Religious Education Directory* enables them to plan challenging and enjoyable lessons for all pupils.
- Gospel values permeate daily life at St Bede's so pupils feel valued and safe. This fosters excellent behaviour and willingness of pupils to engage in all that is offered.
- Staff commitment provides the best possible outcomes for all pupils by supporting the leaders and governors in their pursuit of excellence.
- Links with the parish community enable pupils and families to engage in liturgical celebrations, prayer opportunities and activities which all promote an understanding of their participation in the Church family.

## What the school needs to improve

- Plan time for pupils to evaluate and articulate what they have learnt in religious education to ensure that, as they progress through the school, they deepen their ability to discern.
- Ensure all pupils have the opportunity to make links between their actions to support those in need in the wider community and the Gospel values that underpin their daily lives at St Bede's.

## 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

1

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

1

Pupils contribute enthusiastically to many activities that help them embrace the Catholic life and mission of St Bede's. They know they are made in the image and likeness of God, and one pupil describes this as not being a physical presence but 'how we treat each other'. Pupils are developing an understanding of the importance of their responsibility to look after our world and those in need. Some of the many charities they support include Alder Hey hospital, Mary's Meals and the Mid Cheshire food bank who let them know 'every donation helps us provide food and support to those in crisis, thank you so much.' The Northwich Police commented 'well done to St Bede's Primary School pupils for their beautiful readings and lovely community engagement at the ecumenical Remembrance service.' Because of these activities pupils are learning about the meaning and importance of Catholic social teaching and within school they know they can make a difference through the gardening club, litter picking, recycling and energy saving initiatives led by the eco leaders. Behaviour is excellent during lessons and playtimes. Pupils listen to each other and show respect. They understand the high expectations teachers have of them and know they will be listened to when things go wrong. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to undertake specific ministries through a variety of liturgies and celebrations during the year. They are developing a sound knowledge of scripture in religious education; however, they do not always link the gospel message to the reasons we look after each other and the wider community.

The mission statement is reviewed and shared with staff and pupils every two years. Staff embrace the Catholic mission of the school and enthusiastically support activities that reflect this. Gospel values permeate daily life in the school and responses to questionnaires indicate parents value this. 'St Bede's is an outstanding example of Catholic education in action.' Quality relationships are a strength of the school community and staff describe the school as 'a welcoming community of care and love that embraces individuality'. Staff are exemplary role models and their supportive relationships with each other create a nurturing environment in

which all pupils can flourish. Pastoral provision is a high priority, evidenced in the commitment to supporting the emotional wellbeing of pupils. Emotional literacy support assistants offer weekly Lego therapy and a colour & chat club. The pupils and families benefit from the support of the parish sister who is a regular visitor to school and is a friend when families need extra support.

Leaders and governors are passionate about promoting and embracing the Catholic life and mission at St Bede's. All policies and procedures are underpinned by this commitment. They enthusiastically respond to all diocesan policies and initiatives. The head teacher shares her expertise as a Catholic schools' inspector, and is a mentor for new head teachers. Parish links are a strength. The parish priest and head teacher agree a annual plan of prayer and liturgy for the school and parish community. The successful sacramental programme is an excellent example of the school and parish supporting parents and pupils when preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. There are good links between the St Vincent de Paul society and enthusiastic Mini Vinnies. Leaders and governors recognise that the Catholic curriculum is more than religious education. Therefore, governors willingly contribute to the Catholic life of the school, using their skills to undertake their responsibilities in a variety of ways, including supporting the sacramental programme and children's liturgies, as well as regular informal evaluation which is always reported back to the headteacher and to the board of governors.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

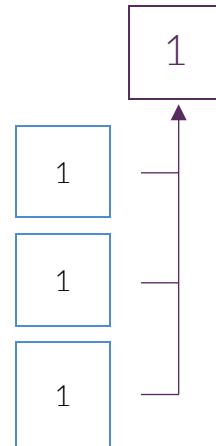
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are developing their knowledge as outlined in the *Religious Education Directory*. From assessment on entry to the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make excellent progress which is systematically built up across each year group. In the Reception class, pupils know 'disciples are special friends of Jesus' and in lower Key Stage 2 pupils confidently talk about the Kingdom of God being 'here'. They can also explain the difference between magic, which is a 'trick', and a miracle, which needs 'faith and trust' in God. In upper Key Stage 2 pupils talk about the Beatitudes 'opening their hearts to the path of God'. They also reflect on how miracles demonstrate the humanity and divinity of Jesus. The development of religious knowledge is outstanding, and pupils confidently use religious vocabulary to express their learning. Behaviour in all lessons is exemplary. Pupils listen attentively to each other and stay on task when working with partners. Work in books is excellent and shows a wide variety of tasks, which pupils enjoy. This is one reason why attainment and progress are strengths in all classes. Pupils know how well they are doing and can talk confidently about what they have learned.

Teachers work hard to develop the knowledge and understanding needed to teach the religious education curriculum. Teachers and support staff recognise the importance of these lessons and therefore have high expectations and standards, which are conveyed consistently to pupils in all classes. As a result, teaching and learning is of a high standard throughout the school. Teachers use the school planning documents and the assessments of learning to ensure that pupils extend their knowledge and skills. Effective questioning is used by all staff to lead and guide pupils as they learn about each topic. In most classes teachers are skilled at adapting explanations to deepen understanding. Adult support effectively aids pupils who need extra help to engage fully in lessons, so pupils of all abilities make excellent progress. Pupils know their work is valued because teachers provide written feedback to affirm their learning and pose further questions if necessary. However, pupils do not always have sufficient time for personal reflection when they receive feedback from teachers. Teachers provide a wide variety of

activities, for example, diaries, artwork, freeze frames and diagrams as well as opportunities for extended writing.

Religious education is at the heart of the curriculum, therefore leaders and governors prioritise professional development, resources and staffing in all areas of governance. Because of this, several teachers have undertaken courses to deepen their personal understanding, such as Christ at the centre and the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. The head teacher ensures lessons are timetabled in such a way that they are seen as an important part of the school curriculum. Governors and staff contribute to the ongoing self-evaluation of religious education and the link governor meets with pupils so they can share their views. The subject leader demonstrates her expertise and understanding of how to achieve outstanding teaching and learning by the wide-ranging support she offers and the training she enables teachers to attend. Teachers appreciate her willingness to support them. By using the detailed planning guidance written by the subject leader, teachers at St Bede's have ownership of a curriculum that is specifically designed for their pupils. The monitoring undertaken by the subject leader is robustly analysed with effective actions planned, including moderation, modelling, coaching, guiding and holding conversations with individuals which results in outstanding teaching. Her dedication, commitment, and expertise secure outstanding teaching and learning across the school.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

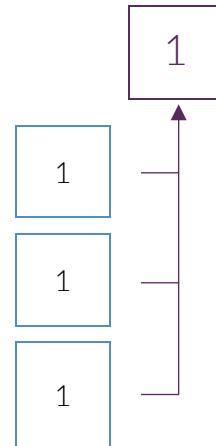
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupils engage in all aspects of prayer and liturgy and have opportunities to pray in silence, through singing, in signing, and with traditional prayers. Their active participation in prayer and liturgy and the willingness of older pupils to undertake particular ministries create prayerful experiences for the pupils at St Bede's. The jubilee year 'School jar of hope' contains pupils' prayers: 'I hope peace spreads through the world' and 'I hope I can be a better person and trust in God more'. In celebrations of the word younger children have their first experiences of sharing their personal thoughts. For example, they will let their light shine 'by being kind, loving others and helping people'. Older pupils' personal reflections include being 'grateful for getting a meal every day as some don't'. As a result of the well-planned calendar of celebrations and liturgies, the changing focus of the prayer tables in classrooms and references made during weekly celebrations of the word, pupils talk confidently about the liturgical year. They recognise the different ways of praying in Lent and Advent. By upper Key Stage 2, pupils undertake ministries during celebrations of the word and in Mass.

Prayer is a daily part of school life. The liturgies and special times celebrated during the year mean pupils participate and engage in many of the rich traditions of the Catholic Church. Teachers choose appropriate scripture passages to reinforce the cycle of the liturgical year and to enrich religious education lessons. Because of this, pupils can engage and participate fully in a wide variety of prayer and liturgy. Staff are keen to deepen their own understanding of prayer so they can help pupils develop their spirituality. For example, children in Reception class understand that the candle is lit 'because God is with us'. In Key Stage 2, pupils pray for Christian unity and reflect on prayers such as St Teresa's prayer, 'Christ has no body now but yours'. Staff use the space available to create a prayerful atmosphere by bringing pupils together around a meaningful focus. They also use lighting, music and artefacts to significantly enhance the quality of prayer. Families and parishioners join in with the prayer life of the school and enjoy the many opportunities throughout the year when they celebrate together.

The newly agreed Prayer and liturgy policy is a useful document for staff and is linked to the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. The subject leader is passionate about sharing her authentic understanding of prayer. She demonstrates inspirational leadership and has a clear understanding of how to build up the confidence of staff to help pupils participate and undertake particular ministries as they progress through the school. Together with the parish priest, leaders plan and prepare a school calendar to ensure all holy days and other significant days and feasts are celebrated in school or in church. Harvest celebration, the exhibition of cribs and prayer trails are examples of this enrichment. Services of Reconciliation are celebrated during Advent and Lent and the sacrament is available to those who wish to receive it. Leaders and governors are committed to funding quality professional development from specialists and the diocese. This means staff realise the centrality and importance of prayer and they are growing in skill and confidence when planning celebrations of the word. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy takes place regularly, however as the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* is implemented, a more formal approach is required. Leaders and governors are committed to offering opportunities for families to experience liturgy in church. These are well attended and parishioners frequently comment on the prayerful and joyful atmosphere during Mass in church

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	111341
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8963538
Full postal address of the school	Keepers Lane, Weaverham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 3BY
School phone number	01606852149
Executive headteacher	N/A
Headteacher	Louise Conlon
Chair of governors	Paula Aspinall
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-bedes.cheshire.sch.uk">http://www.st-bedes.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 June 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Susan Lyonette

Lead

Susan Ralph

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