



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Bede's Catholic School And Byron Sixth Form College, Peterlee

URN: 148304

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator
of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 20-21 April 2023

Overall effectiveness		2
The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....		
Catholic life and mission (p.2)		
How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	2	↑
Religious education (p.3)		
The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1	—
Collective worship (p.4)		
The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2	—
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	—
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	—
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully	—

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- There is a tangible family feel within the school community; the quality of pastoral care offered to all is a real strength. Students feel valued, commenting that the school does all that it can to support them; particularly the most vulnerable.
- Teaching and learning in religious education is outstanding. Leaders are fully aware of the strengths of the department and understand what needs to be done to improve further.
- The school's religious curriculum is well sequenced and the religious education department is well supported by other subjects. This holistic approach ensures that the school offers the best it can to its students.

- The chaplaincy team are a driving force in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school; they are highly valued by staff and students.
- The school's relationships and sex education programme is a strength of the curriculum. It is well resourced and bespoke; being personalised to suit the context of the school and its surrounding community.

What the school needs to improve:

- Strengthen the provision for collective worship by adopting a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation.
- Provide a dedicated prayer space for students who practise other faiths.
- Ensure more consistent marking and feedback in religious education through regular monitoring and the sharing of the excellent practice that already exists within the department.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

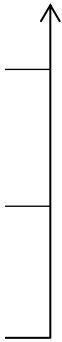
The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

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

2



Outcomes for Catholic life and mission at St Bede's Catholic School and Byron Sixth Form College are good because all staff and students understand and appreciate the distinctive Catholic identity and charisma of their school. The warm, caring environment, extended to everyone, ensures that all feel valued and accepted as part of this inclusive school community. As a result, students feel happy, safe and confident, both academically and holistically. The mission statement is witnessed and evident throughout the classrooms and corridors; with students believing that with the Lord's help, they really can be united in faith, be determined to achieve and ably motivated to strive for excellence. The strong pastoral structures at St Bede's help to drive this, with heads of house and form tutors using key moments at the beginning of the school day to highlight notable successes, to reward positive behaviour and to model the teachings of Jesus to all students. Opportunities are provided for students to respond to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching, enabling students to live out the mission of the school and support the poorest and most vulnerable in the global community. Students in the newly formed Equality Group, who are supported by the highly valued chaplaincy team, are passionate exponents of this. They underpin their response to social action with key teachings of Jesus and the Catholic Church. The strong reward system is highly regarded by students and inspires them to be positive role models for each other.

The provision for Catholic life and mission is underpinned by the belief that Christ is at the heart of the school. The mission statement lays the foundation for the whole school curriculum intent, inspiring individual curriculum leaders to actively seek opportunities to collaborate and work together. This commitment to the implementation of the mission

statement across the curriculum further highlights the importance of Catholic life as a whole-school priority. Lesson observations and meetings with key pastoral leaders demonstrate that the school provides students with the highest levels of pastoral care, with an unwavering commitment to the most vulnerable students in the school community. Excellent relationships with outside agencies, parents and carers help to promote progress and to raise aspiration. Students are enabled to further deepen their faith through retreats at the Emmaus Youth Village and through regular opportunities to attend Mass. The provision for relationships and sex education is a particular strength of the school. It is well planned and fully compliant with statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leadership of Catholic life and mission is good because leaders prioritise it as a core leadership responsibility and they ensure that it underpins all whole school policies and practices. Middle leaders seek out opportunities to make explicit links to religious education as they recognise its importance as the core of the curriculum. For example, curriculum plans in English, geography and modern foreign languages make clear links in their curriculum plans to morality, stewardship and pilgrimage respectively. Leaders at St Bede's have cultivated strong links with parishes and they ensure that communication with parents and carers is timely and consistent, recognising that they are the first educators of their children. Induction for new staff is effective and staff feel highly supported by leaders, enabling them to lead prayer and liturgy and confidently fulfil their commitment as Catholic educators.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....	1
Pupil outcomes How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....	1
Provision The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....	1
Leadership How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....	1

Attainment is outstanding in religious education, with the vast majority of students achieving well and making excellent progress. Students confirm that they value and enjoy the subject. A significant number of students continue to study related courses beyond GCSE. Younger students comment that the subject 'makes them think about the big things' and all students recognise the importance of learning about other faiths and cultures, understanding that this prepares them well for life in a multi-cultural society. The religious education department is a team of dedicated staff with excellent subject knowledge. Lessons have a calm and purposeful feel, and students are fully engaged in their work. Relationships between staff and students are extremely positive and students appreciate the work that staff do to ensure they learn in the best way possible. In all lessons observed behaviour was outstanding, with the vast majority of students taking a real pride in their work; a reflection of their attitude to the subject and their relationship with their teachers. During lessons most students are able to articulate their thoughts and feelings well. Literacy is a focus for the department and the subject leader has plans to develop this further. Staff adopt a variety of approaches to engage students and stretch their thinking and this is capitalised on at the start of lesson through retrieval activities, particularly with older students. Students comfortably work in groups and independently, being engaged in tasks that are well suited to their ability. Outstanding adaptive teaching ensures all students are engaged in meaningful tasks. Where teaching is outstanding, staff use questioning to full effect with some excellent examples of targeted deeper questioning during discussions. Staff use time well in lessons to maximise learning.

There are a range of assessment activities that offer variety and rigour. Written comments in books are thoughtful and well-considered with constructive feedback comments given.

However, there are inconsistencies in marking and feedback. Some students do not respond to feedback requests and this is not always followed up by staff. Systematic monitoring of students' work, coupled with departmental professional development that shares good practice, would ensure that all students have the same opportunity to develop their learning and improve their skills.

Leaders and managers have ensured that religious education provision meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference, providing the required time allocation for each key stage. Governance is strong. Governors have a good understanding of the department's strengths and recognise the improvements made in the department over recent years. They also know what needs to be done to improve further. Governors know their community well and can give thoughtful direction to the leadership team. Senior Leaders are effective and rigorous in their approach to improvement. They are excellent at communicating their intentions and this strong communication, coupled with a flexible approach to monitoring curriculum impact, ensures that staff can manage change with confidence and continue to deliver outstanding provision to students. The head of department is a strong leader and an outstanding teacher. Relatively new to the school, he has a love of the subject and a clear vision for religious education at St Bede's. He has quickly gained a good understanding of his department and has put a number of plans in place to address areas for improvement. However, these plans are newly introduced and are not yet embedded or monitored over time. He is also supported by a middle leadership team that are fully on board with the mission of the school thereby ensuring that religious education is woven into all aspects of the school curriculum.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

Prayer and liturgy at St Bede's is good. Prayer is a key part of the day and there is allocated time for this, which is used well. Mass is celebrated in school weekly, with a specific tutor group attending each week, but this is open to all and is well attended by staff and students generally. Pupils are keen to participate in Mass and liturgies and a number of students read in Mass, house assembly and tutor time sessions. They do this willingly and with confidence. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and, when interviewed, most can make the connections between the liturgical year and the carefully planned themes for the liturgies. It was evident from interviews that not all students are involved in the planning of liturgy sessions. This is recognised by the school and is a focus for development.

Staff are strong role models, leading and participating in prayer and liturgies. The school chapel is a calm and inspiring space which is used respectfully by all. The same is true of other prayer spaces around school. Student interviews highlighted the need for a dedicated prayer space for students who practise other faiths. The same students commented that the school could raise awareness of the key celebrations within their faith in the spirit of inclusivity. Links with local parishes are good, with parish priests regularly visiting the school and celebrating Mass. Members of the community are also regularly invited to share in the school's prayer and liturgy, one example being the group of parents and carers who come into school to say the rosary with their children. Links with local primary schools are strong. Younger pupils are invited into the school for liturgies during the summer term and the school's music department has also established excellent links with primary schools, spending time in schools to enhance liturgical music provision. The provision for prayer and liturgy is clearly seen in the day-to-day life of the school. Students speak positively and confidently about their experiences

of prayer and liturgy practice. However, they are not yet all aware of Catholic Social Teaching principles.

The chaplaincy team are a driving force in embedding and raising the profile of prayer and liturgy within the school. They have identified the school's areas for development and have plans in place. Rigorous monitoring of this work will ensure that all students' experiences are the best that they can be. Staff feel that they are well led and supported by the Chaplain and this, alongside the extensive staff training programme that the school offers, ensures that most are confident in providing meaningful prayer and liturgy experiences for students. Leaders are skilled in articulating and promoting the school's vision for prayer and liturgy. Prayer sessions often include periods of reflection, where students are asked to consider their own actions. This results in good behaviour and positive interactions with their peers.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic School and Byron Sixth Form College
School unique reference number (URN)	148304
Full postal address of the school	Westway, Peterlee, Co. Durham, SR8 1DE
School phone number	0191 587 6220
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Frances Cessford
Chair of governing board	Mr Anthony McCourt
School Website	www.st-bedes.org
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11 - 18
Trustees	The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	26-27 May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mark Taylor	Lead inspector
Roisin Ross	Team inspector
Michael Hughes	Team inspector

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