



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

WIDNES

Inspection Date	23 October 2019
Inspectors	Mrs. Denise Hegarty Mrs. Meg Buckley Mrs. Annamaria Roberts
Unique Reference Number	111371

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School	Catholic Junior
Age range of pupils	7-11
Number on roll	305
Chair of Governors	Mr. P Owen
Headteacher	Mrs. F Tiernan
School address	Appleton Village Widnes Cheshire WA8 6EL
Telephone number	0151 424 3386
E-mail address	sec.stbedesjunior@halton.gov.uk
Date of last inspection	22 October 2014

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about this school

- St Bede's is a larger than average sized Catholic junior school situated in Widnes serving the Parish of St Wilfrid, Widnes (formerly the parishes of St Bede's, St. Raphael's and St. Pius).
- There are 305 children on roll of whom 298 are baptised Catholic. Seven children come from other Christian denominations.
- There are 19 teachers in the school of whom 14 are baptised Catholic. Eighteen teach Religious Education. Nine teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher. The Religious Education co-ordinator is very new to her post having previously shadowed a very experienced co-ordinator and taken over from her at the start of the current school year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Bede's school is outstanding in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They have an excellent sense of belonging to the school community and look out for the needs of others as they work for the common good.
- Pupils participate in the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and are part of planning improvements to it. At the start of each year, they look at what the school's Mission Statement means to them. They are given the opportunity to explore and contribute to the it. They were involved in devising a child-friendly statement which they know, understand and live out daily. At interview on the day of inspection, it was evident that children clearly understand that their mission, whilst they attend St Bede's, is to 'live life to the full' and they know that they are to 'respect, love and achieve' throughout their time at the school.
- They show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. They understand that they are all unique children of God and know that they are loved and valued as individuals.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Their conduct and attitudes are a tribute to the school. They show a deep understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They told an inspector, "We have expectations here – not rules. Then, nothing is ever broken - it is a much nicer way." They were involved in devising ways to make their playground a happy, peaceful place. Another child commented, "Happiness is shared and spread here – that's what makes this school unique."
- Pupils willingly and wholeheartedly accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school both within school and the wider community. Year Six pupils are involved in the prefect system and contribute to the welcoming ethos of their Catholic school. The school councillors enjoy 'making things better' for their peers by making good choices for their school. The house captains embody the values from the Gospel, share information about their patronal saints and are excellent role models for other pupils to emulate. Representatives confidently and competently gave the inspectors a tour of the school at the start of their day and proudly demonstrated what excellent ambassadors they are for the school.
- Pupils are very proud of the enterprising activities they have undertaken in support of their charity work. They take leading and active roles in raising funds during Lent and Advent for charities such as CAFOD, Nugent and Mary's Meals.
- The eco committee spread an awareness of the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. They are driving a change based on Pope Francis' encyclical letter, 'Laudato Si' and for social justice especially by trying to reduce plastic pollution.

- Pupils value and participate in opportunities provided by the school, such as visits and retreats. Residential trips for each year group enable pupils to develop social skills and learn how to be considerate of and work collaboratively with others to achieve their goals.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. They take full and active roles in the many extra-curricular activities available to them. These include Bible journaling, arts and sports clubs. Within these roles, they learn the value of teamwork and co-operation as they develop their individual gifts and talents.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding. Outstanding relationships across the school reflect the Gospel values of love, respect and justice.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. They strive for justice and fairness for all. Having taken an active part in the achievement of CAFOD's *Livesimply Award*, they have gained a great understanding of the need to 'live simply so others can simply live'.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. This was evident recently in the manner in which they shared their views and produced beautiful artwork in response to the Synod questions.
- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identities and stances.
- They are very proud of the school's vibrant environment. At interview, one child commented, "I love the amazing displays which we do." Others agreed and appreciated the efforts made to provide such inspirational surroundings.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. The mission, vision and values of the school enable the community to live harmoniously in pursuit of the common good.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as, retreats, staff prayer, Continuous Professional Development on Catholic Life.
- There is a clear sense of community at all levels, evident in the strength of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. All members are completely dedicated to the Catholic Life and character of the school as they strive to live the mission each day.
- The whole environment reflects the school's commitment to promoting a welcoming ethos. From the moment you enter the school building, it is evident that it truly reflects the school's mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. There are wonderful devotional areas, inspirational artwork and beautiful Christian displays along corridors, work bases and the school hall. The outdoor areas are being refurbished and the Eden peace garden is a haven for quiet reflection.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are very good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. The school has recently adapted their behaviour policy to value and reward positive reinforcement of good, appropriate behaviour so children can gain rewards for their houses.

- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. Everyone in the school community is encouraged to flourish and to realise their full human potential as children of God. In accordance with their mission, they strive to 'live life in all its fullness'.
- A parent commented, "The ethos underpinning the curriculum is a tangible force for the formation of each child. Consequently, my child has matured over his time here to begin to become the dream God has for him."
- The school has great global links with schools in India, China and South Africa and has hosted visitors from these schools. Staff members at St. Bede's have made reciprocal visits. These links enable pupils to have a deep awareness of global citizenship and to recognise their responsibilities towards those less fortunate. The school has achieved the International Schools' Award in recognition of the work that it does in working with projects overseas.
- To demonstrate their desire to promote the common good, the school community is committed to, and well on the way to achieving Eco-School Status and to becoming a School of Sanctuary. It has recently been awarded CAFOD's *LiveSimply* Award for putting faith into action.
- The school provides a great range of opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. There are many enrichment opportunities provided for children including visits to parks, art galleries, museums, places of interest etc.
- The school strives to forge greater links with the parish and enjoys a positive relationship with the church community. The parish clergy are effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. All year groups have visited the parish church. The school facilitates and supports the parish sacramental preparation programme.
- Policies and structures are in place, which provide outstanding pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. Key members of school staff, including a family support worker, are trained in a range of holistic support interventions including play therapy and social and emotional learning.
- The school has a regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. The school's Relationship and Sex Education curriculum has been devised by the subject leader and has the *Journey in Love* programme, recommended by the archdiocese, at the heart of learning.
- The *Rainbows* programme is successfully embedded in school life and benefits those pupils who have suffered any kind of loss.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is clearly given priority by leaders. It is very effectively and rigorously monitored and evaluated through the objectives that emanate from the aims of the school's Mission statement.
- All leaders and governors are a source of inspiration for the community.

- The School Development Plan addresses the way forward for the school and embeds the Catholic Life into all aspects of improvement. This leads to self-challenge and planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school. All leaders and staff members are clearly committed to the mission and do their utmost to ensure all children and members of the community have opportunities to 'live life to the full'.
- The school's rich and holistic curriculum has the mission at the heart. Together with many extra-curricular and enrichment activities, it ensures that children have the chance to develop and express their gifts and talents.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is highly effective. There are excellent induction procedures in place for staff who are new to the school. All staff members are encouraged to complete the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* and take up is high. Leaders have also undertaken the *Catholic Leadership Programme*, or the *Catholic Middle Leadership Programme* provided by the North West Catholic Dioceses Training Partnership, as appropriate. As a result, their understanding of the school's mission in education is excellent and all are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- St Bede's is an inclusive, welcoming community and the school has gained an Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence Award.
- Parents, carers and visitors are made very welcome. The school has strategies for engaging with them to the benefit of pupils. There are regular early morning sessions when they can drop in for breakfast and a chat. As a result, parents and carers have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. Their views and suggestions are sought and welcomed via the school website or the parent and carer working party.
- The governing body is passionate about the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and are extremely supportive. They are dedicated to the school's mission and are involved in its review and evaluation. One governor commented, "It is evident through discussion in Governing Body meetings that every decision made in school is made with children at the heart and Christ at the centre."
- Governors share a wide variety of skills and a range of expertise. They regularly avail themselves of training opportunities to improve their effectiveness. They are thus able to support and constructively challenge leaders to provide the best experiences for staff and pupils and enable them all to 'have life in all its fullness.'
- They have approved and ratified all policies associated with the Catholic Life of the school etc. and ensure that policies are true reflections of the practice that occurs.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. A wonderful display of the outcomes of Synod 2020 questions graces a wall in the school hall and demonstrates a commitment to support the process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Pupils, from their starting points, make outstanding progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.

- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are very religiously literate. They are engaged young people who use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. Consequently, pupils are aware of how to put their faith into action and often actively do so.
- Pupils are enthusiastically engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- They concentrate very well, understand how well they are doing, know what they need to do to improve, and can articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great enthusiasm and often excitement. They thoroughly enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual because children are interested and anxious to complete their tasks.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment and formal assessment is high and reflects standards in other core subjects. This level of attainment has been sustained over time.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is excellent. Children take great pride in the presentation of their work and are happy to share it with others.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers consistently plan topics effectively, so lessons are linked to pupils' current assessment and build exceptionally well on their prior attainment. As a result of this, teaching is mainly good to outstanding and pupils learn very well.
- Teachers are very secure in their subject expertise. They have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the topics from the *Come and See* programme and use key vocabulary confidently and accurately. They incorporate pupils' ideas and experiences very well and have an excellent understanding of how pupils learn. Consequently, pupils apply themselves very well and make outstanding progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Subsequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate hard in lessons. Work is challenging and differentiated by task, time, support and outcome. 'Driver words' from the *Draft Standards in Religious Education* are used effectively to pitch work at the appropriate level.
- Assessment for learning strategies are used to great effect. Work is scaffolded appropriately to focus and support pupils.
- Across the school, excellent use is made of 'talking partners' to enable pupils to share ideas and gain in confidence and understanding.
- Teachers manage time well to maximise learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons. There is no slippage and pace of lessons is generally swift.
- Teachers use observation and questioning very effectively during lessons in order to assess pupils' understanding of the content covered. Consequently, they adapt tasks set and explanations given, so further improving learning for pupils.
- They manage pupils' behaviour highly effectively to enable them to understand the right choices to make. Pupils, therefore, work collaboratively and show mutual respect towards each other.
- High quality resources are used very successfully to optimise learning for pupils. Additional adults in the classroom, when available, are deployed very effectively.
- Teachers communicate high expectations about Religious Education to their pupils, all of whom respond positively. High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged and celebrated. This leads to high levels of motivation from all pupils who take great pride in the work they produce.

- Displays in classrooms are of a high standard. They have a positive impact on pupils' learning and celebrate their success.
- Teachers excellent feedback leads to the engagement, interest and achievement of pupils. This contributes to outstanding progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. Pupils clearly understand the marking code used by staff and respond accordingly.
- Dedicated weeks have explored Judaism and Hinduism. Visitors are invited into school to support these weeks and to share their faith, religious backgrounds and traditions.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education is seen as the core subject in the school. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect.
- Leaders and governors carefully monitor timetables to ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in order to maintain the high standards that have existed over time.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. A programme of continuing professional development is fully in place and teachers participate in regular in-service training. Time is used during staff meetings to consider the *Come and See for Yourself* part of the programme before staff begin a new theme, or to discuss new initiatives to support achievement in Religious Education
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully and quickly implemented.
- A robust programme of monitoring and evaluation takes place each year. The subject co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work. She moderates pupils' assessments. Together with the headteacher, she observes teaching and learning and carries out learning walks across the school. Constructive feedback is then given to those observed.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a true reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in strategic action taken by the school which leads to at least very good outcomes in Religious Education.
- The subject co-ordinator for Religious Education has recently succeeded a highly experienced colleague who facilitated the changeover outstandingly. The present co-ordinator has grown into the role and uses her creative flair exceptionally well to make her own mark and bring the subject to life. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is likely to be at least consistently very good.
- The link governor for Religious Education advises, shares information and supports the subject co-ordinator. She understands the process of delivering the subject as central to the entire curriculum. They meet regularly to monitor and evaluate standards, teaching and learning etc.
- Governors are kept well informed of new initiatives and standards in Religious Education particularly through the headteacher's report to governors. Members of the Standards Committee undertake scrutiny of work.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different key stages and phases.

- Parents and carers are kept well-informed of their children's attainment and progress in Religious Education through reports and meetings. They are regularly invited into school to share their children's learning. They are also provided with dedicated newsletters concerning the subject which are tailored to suit the needs of the school. More generally information is provided on the school's excellent website and posted on social media.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show utmost reverence and respect and are keen to actively participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully with great gusto, often using signing and actions as well. They are able to reflect purposefully in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and confidently.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead aspects of worship with confidence and enthusiasm. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. Other pupils are engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers. They particularly enjoy times when their parents and other members of the community can attend worship with them.
- Pupils understand and use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary.
- They have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect an excellent understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Opportunities for prayer are taken at key times in the school day.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging, and all members of the community speak positively about these opportunities.
- A variety of experiences are provided in a range of settings.
- High quality resources, including the use of music, are used well to enhance worship. There are a number of inspiring devotional areas around the school and an outdoor peace garden which all give opportunities for private prayer and reflection
- Relevant staff are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have excellent experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- A hymn practice session - 'Rejoice in Song' takes place each week and is an opportunity for pupils and staff to come together to praise and thank God in song. This is an uplifting occasion much enjoyed by pupils who respond enthusiastically.

- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a true understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is excellent. Evaluative statements from parents and carers indicate their deep appreciation of the worship they have attended. Governors are invited to, and are represented at, services, assemblies, school Masses and Collective worship for the community.
- The Wednesday Word is provided for families to share the Sunday Gospel together at home.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- They understand and value liturgy and worship and begin all meetings with an act of worship and reflection.
- Leaders and governors provide suitable policies and guidelines which are consistently applied across the school and enable staff and pupils to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship.
- They have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are outstanding models of practice for staff and pupils to emulate. They all understand the liturgical structure used in worship and consistently and competently use it in their planning and delivery.
- They enthusiastically promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship.
- Leaders offer regular professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes and consider the development of Collective Worship to be a priority.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Improve self-evaluation processes further by:
 - using the information from the monitoring and evaluation schedule, including pupils' views, to measure the impact of provision and inform outcomes.
- Further develop the provision of Collective Worship by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to plan and lead worship;
 - clearly identifying times for worship on timetables.
- Continue to address the areas for development as outlined in the Self Evaluation Document.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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CATHOLIC LIFE

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 for the Catholic Life of the school	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate