



St Bede's Catholic High School

URN: 119792

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

07–08 February 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

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

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Leaders, including the headteacher, chaplain and subject leader for religious education are inspirational. Supported by other leaders and governors, they have intensely focused on the school's Catholic mission, sought improvement, and set new standards for all.
- The strategies adopted for prayer and liturgy ensure that students and staff understand how the Word of God can be applied to their lives.
- The personal development programme is expertly devised. It provides a well-thought out and relevant curriculum designed to support the development of students as unique individuals, made in the image of God.

- The religious education curriculum at Key Stage Three consists of a bespoke scheme and expertly reflects the needs of the students and prepares them for their studies and faith journey.
- Outcomes for students at St Bede's are outstanding in every way. Progress and attainment are very strong compared to other subjects and national outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- In line with whole school developments, review systems and practices for consistency in marking and feedback in religious education.
- The school should explore design options for a central space where students can gather for formation activities including prayer and liturgy.

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

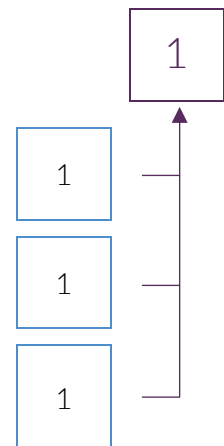
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Since the last inspection, the school has rewritten its mission statement. This has promoted change and opened opportunities for this community to re-establish its distinctive Catholic character, set new challenges, and rapidly improve provision and outcomes. Students understand and are proactive in sharing the message that *"staying connected to the vine empowers us to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives"*. Students willingly and confidently perceive themselves to be God's children. This leads to a sense of happiness and security in the St Bede's community. The variety of opportunities framing St Bede's as a Catholic school provide a deep well for all students to draw from. The abundant focus on Catholic social teaching at all levels supports, in students, a moral formation which is educated and allows them to grow in virtue. Students proudly explain how they respect and value everyone's uniqueness and link this to their own experiences, their concepts of dignity, and their support for the most vulnerable. Students' exceptional understanding and involvement in the Catholic life and mission of the school can largely be sourced to chaplaincy and their participation in this provision in all its forms.

The consistently promoted mission statement provides an accurate depiction of the school's essence and guides its distinctive spirit. Staff are reliable witnesses to Christian living and speak warmly about improvements made by key leaders, who, themselves, show great emotional intelligence and possess the skills to motivate and inspire. The close sense of community within is such that the wider community feel drawn in. Links with the *Ormskirk School Pastors* and weekly choral opportunities are good examples. Conscious of the need to promote diversity and ensure what is offered is inclusive and reflective of society, staff create opportunities for students to express their opinions and educate their peers. Pastoral care is exceptional, and additional staff expertise in well-being and mental health are used via the *Draw and Talk* and *Make Talk Your Goal*

initiatives, thereby illustrating the breadth of provision. The lay chaplain is inspirational, rekindling the focus on Catholic life and facilitating a growth in formation among staff and students. Her personal drive for excellence brings capacity to this central feature and her positivity is infectious. Policy and curriculum for relationships, sex and health education are well-designed. *Ten Ten* is used as a core resource, and supplementary materials cater for the varying needs of students. Teachers are well-trained, and robust quality assurance systems contribute to ensuring consistent and suitable delivery.

The strategy for school improvement is built around Catholic life and mission and is communicated as the highest priority. Quality assurance reviews are regular and well-focused with leaders and governors working in harness to secure better outcomes. Links with parishes are fostered well, with clergy motivating and guiding school leaders, staff and students. Parents feel supported and understand the drive to engage their children in the school's mission. Leaders show respect for the dignity of staff who are consulted about change. The concept that life in a Catholic school is governed by the teachings of Christ is exemplified in subject curriculums based around the principles of Catholic social teaching. Evaluations, undertaken by leaders, ensure that there is ambition for continual improvement. Driven by the headteacher, this notion is shared widely across the staff who recognise what is special about St Bede's, and what needs to improve. The school regularly polls opinions from students and staff and adjustments to policy often result. Processes for staff induction and training are well-organised and effective. The booklet *Quality of Education* is a proud reflection of the staff's responsibilities as Catholic educators.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

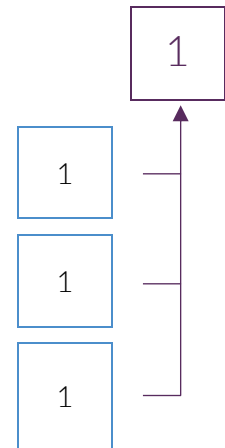
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



There is a solid religious education curriculum in place at Key Stage Three. This meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* and reflects the unique mission and character of the school and its locality. Planning is well structured, and high in quality, ensuring student engagement in lessons. Consequently, they make excellent progress by knowing more, remembering more, and doing more. Opportunities for creativity are strategically built in, and this enables students to develop skills for independent learning. This helps students build subject specific knowledge and supports learning at GCSE level. Examples of this include the *Finding God Project* covered in year nine and the *Ormskirk Community Hub Project* in Year Eight. There is a clear strategy for marking and feedback. Nevertheless, it is not yet consistently applied. For some students this means they do not understand the steps they need to take to improve. Religious literacy is systematically reinforced; students show confidence and proficiency in using complex religious terminology to support their learning. Students enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. The consistently high expectations from staff and clear classroom routines ensure that most of the work produced is of an excellent standard. GCSE outcomes are very strong, surpassing those in maths and English as well as nationally for religious education.

Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and expertise. This is used in lessons to adapt learning to students' age, ability, and to consolidate and expand students' knowledge. Non-specialist staff are well supported and show a keenness to develop their own skills and knowledge. The use of questioning to engage students and assess understanding is skilful. Positive relationships exist between teachers and students who are treated with dignity and rewarded appropriately with praise. A wide range of resources are used to engage students in learning and developing skills. The departmental strategy of *Be More Bede* also focuses on the development of key skills and the ability to read scripture and sources of wisdom through

different senses or interpretations. The collaborative development of a departmental statement of intent reflects teachers' profound understanding of the impact that religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of students. This also clearly embeds the teaching of religious education within the wider Catholic life and mission of the school.

The subject leader is inspirational and has a clear vision for the department. The expertise and skills of team members are used to develop key strategies so that teaching and learning in religious education continually improves. There is strong and expert support from senior staff in improvement work. The curriculum is carefully sequenced allowing students to revisit knowledge and skills as they progress through their education journey. This good planning contributes to the very good student progress. Opportunities for enrichment are available through extra-curricular activities and embedded within the curriculum. The purpose of this is explained as 'a desire for students to see the Catholic faith as one that looks outward, not inward'. This enables students to put what they have studied about Catholic social teaching and tradition into practice. Links with the wider community are used to support student learning. There are regular visits from the school's priest chaplain who talks to students in lessons to help them to understand their faith. Similarly, the local sixth form college arranges taster sessions for students. This encourages progression and raises aspirations. Leaders and governors ensure parity with other core subjects and have been supportive in protecting staff time during the formation of the new curriculum. There is a regular programme of training within the department accompanied by training through external providers.

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

1

1

Students collaborate in the task of producing and delivering prayer and liturgy. Their skills have now developed to the stage whereby they are becoming self-critical so as to improve further. Those involved in the liturgy group gain most from these experiences, but it is evident that many students value and are involved in the preparation and delivery as readers, eucharistic ministers, musicians and choristers. Students show reverence during prayer and the weekly use of *Lectio Divina* immerses students in the Word of God. As a result, they are able to confidently explain scriptural text accurately and with meaning. Students' understanding of the connections between prayer and liturgy and the wider curriculum is developed in many ways. Typical of this was the way a year seven student linked four experiences: a geography lesson, his involvement in the *Live Simply* group, prayers focused on the plight of refugees and the concept of stewardship. At major gatherings such as in Holy Week and in Advent, the student body draws together in large numbers and engages in impressive community celebration. It is here that the students, their families and friends, staff, governors, and the clergy who support the school, gain rich liturgical experiences.

Prayer and liturgy are consistently of high quality and form a central part of school life for staff and students. Routines are well established and faithfully reflect the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. The lay chaplain skilfully uses staff feedback and student voice to adapt prayer and liturgy resources, including the *Lectio Divina*, to the needs and context of the students in her care. The *Lectio Divina* provides students with opportunities to reflect on scripture. Staff are vocal about their confidence with materials provided which frequently have layers of differentiation to ensure age appropriateness. The headteacher and lay chaplain recognised that physical spaces for prayer were necessary improvements two years ago. These spaces, located away from the hub of the school, have much improved the ability of the lay chaplain to engage students in

different ministries and create a sense of belonging for several different groups. Nevertheless, they are peripheral in the context of the expression, *Christ at the Centre*. Despite the fact leaders, supported by clergy, make very good use of St Anne's, the assembly hall and, when applicable, the sports hall, the school would be improved if an appropriate prayer room was placed somewhere close to the heart of the school.

The lay chaplain, supported by school leaders, has expertly planned the development of prayer and liturgy, monitored progress at every stage and ensured that students' experiences are rich, varied and always linked to scripture. Systems of quality assurance are light touch but give confidence to leaders and provide assurance to staff who seek to deliver a meaningful product to the students. Opportunities to celebrate Mass on a weekly basis are well taken and open possibilities for students and staff to engage in eucharistic ministry. There is a strong core of leaders, supported by other staff, who possess the experience and drive in the planning and production of liturgical events. The school has recently increased the time allocation for professional development which has opened more opportunities for staff formation. This is a positive change spreading responsibility across teams. Since the last inspection, the school has invested in prayer and liturgy by appointing a full-time lay chaplain, providing time for the musical director to plan, and by adjusting curriculum time at the start of the day. Because of this, staff and student experiences are high in quality and impactful in fulfilling the school mission statement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bede's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	119792
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8884631
Full postal address of the school	St Bede's Catholic High School, St Anne's Road, Ormskirk, L39 4TA
School phone number	01695570335
Headteacher	Daniel Morgan
Chair of Governors	John Riley
School Website	http://www.sbchs.co.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	29 March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Philip Mooney	Lead
Sarah Daley	Team
Joanne Farrimond	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