



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

St Bede's Catholic Middle School

Holloway Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 7HA

Inspection dates:

12th-13th June 2018

Lead Inspector:

Paul Nutt

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: Requires Improvement

Catholic Life: Good

Religious Education: Requires Improvement

Collective Worship: Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection: Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

- Catholic Life is a real strength of the school, it is evident in all aspects of its life, and includes the whole community. Behaviour is outstanding, and there is a rich environment for all to develop their faith. Its quality and appropriateness are regularly reviewed, a process which includes senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Progress and outcomes in Religious Education are at least good. However, teaching and learning is inconsistent, and the leadership of Religious Education requires significant further development.
- The life of the school is clearly enriched by a wide variety of opportunities for Collective Worship. Pupils generally respond with enthusiasm and reverence to the opportunities to take part in the preparation and delivery of worship. However, form prayer needs to consistently inspire pupils to have a meaningful response.
- The school's leadership, both individually and as a team, is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education, which they defend robustly.
- There is clear evidence that the school has responded positively to the recommendations of the previous Section 48 Report.

It is not yet Good because:

- There is not secure leadership of Religious Education as a core subject. Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education does not happen frequently enough to sufficiently improve teaching and learning.
- Teaching in Religious Education is not consistent.
- Some pupils are unclear of how to improve their work.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that there is robust leadership of Religious Education, which has a clear vision for its development.
- Provide a consistent quality of teaching in Religious Education.
- Ensure that pupils understand fully how to improve their attainment outcomes, both through regular, systematic feedback, and as part of overall assessment procedures.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.**The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Pupils know that Christ is at the centre of all we do and they understand the importance of religious belief and spiritual values for themselves and others. Perhaps because of its length, many are not able to recite the mission statement, or to explain with clarity the distinctive mission of St Bede's School.
- The Catholic Life of the school is very evident upon arrival at St Bede's. There is a prevailing atmosphere of calm and respect, politeness and thought for others. There are displays and prayer areas in classrooms and other significant places around the school, though not all of these are immediately visible. The Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile is increasingly prominent around the building and used in all aspects of school life and learning. There is a well-appointed prayer garden which is tended and maintained by pupils.
- Pupils lead and take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character, in school and the wider community. For example, the Mini Vinnies group produce Christmas cards for the homeless.
- St Bede's School offers an environment that is rich in Catholic Life, with relationships and role models that are faith-filled and reverent. This enables the pupils to develop within a strong Catholic ethos, and it supports and encourages them as they learn how to live as Christians or people of faith.
- Relationships are a real strength of the school where everyone is valued as an individual and treated with respect.
- Pupils understand that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important for themselves and others.
- Pupils make excellent contributions to chaplaincy and provide leadership, for example through the work of the prayer leaders, contributing to pupils' understanding of the school's ethos and mission.
- Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and enquiring. As a result, they respond very positively to opportunities to express their opinions. They enjoy their involvement in

evaluating their Catholic education, expressing their own views and beliefs with increasing confidence and clarity. For example, the chaplaincy group saw its suggestions for making rosary beads and prayer cards come to fruition.

- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and to participate purposefully in the life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities. There is a flourishing range of charitable activities throughout the year and some of these are suggested by pupils.
- In addition to charities such as Cafod, Fr Hudson's and St Vincent de Paul Society the school also has a Lenten challenge for each house, which raises money for a nominated charity.
- Spiritual, moral and vocational development is a priority in school. There is an all-encompassing ethos which values all equally, and to which all pupils respond with generosity and compassion.
- Pupils understand that we are called to a life of service and respond readily to the needs of others. They also regularly support charitable causes, with great generosity, throughout the year.
- Pupils have a strong sense of vocation and a commitment to the common good, within and beyond the school. They show a good understanding of the need to forgive and to be forgiven, and of the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils are developing a strong understanding of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP). They are able to explain which pair of virtues from the CSPP are the current half-term focus and are able to give examples of how they act them out in their own lives.
- Behaviour is very good at all times, with pupils demonstrating high levels of respect for others within and beyond school.
- Pupils demonstrate both interest in and a sense of responsibility for the environment and life of the school. Their interests and suggestions are well represented to the lay chaplain and senior leaders by peers on the school council, in the chaplaincy and prayer leaders' groups, and the Minnie Vinnies. Membership and interest in these groups is increasing.
- The parish priest is a valued and regular visitor to school, where he works with individual classes and staff to develop their knowledge and understanding in Religious Education. He is also available to answer questions about the Catholic faith.
- All staff recognise a responsibility to contribute to pupils' social, moral and vocational development. They engage actively with this across the whole wider curriculum.
- As a result, the Catholic Life of St Bede's is actively promoted in areas of the curriculum beyond Religious Education, and specific aspects are included very naturally in the learning experiences of pupils. For example, in History at key stage 2 the pupils study belief systems of ancient civilisations.
- Reading levels were identified as a whole school issue. In response to this, and to supplement opportunities for spiritual development, each class takes part in a scripture session. These sessions include prayer, a reading from scripture, questions to check comprehension and time for quiet reflection.
- The school's relationship and sex education programme is appropriate to the age of pupils and consistent with the teachings of the Church.

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

- The principal and his senior colleagues provide very strong leadership to the whole school community by their personal example. They are given effective support by well-informed governors who are generous with their time and efforts.
- Governors and senior leaders are a source of inspiration for the whole school community. They understand how their beliefs should be manifested in their behaviour and relationships and act upon it.
- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and defend it robustly. They actively promote the ethos of the school by ensuring a wide range of rich, broad and balanced experiences, focused on the spiritual, moral and vocational development of the whole St Bede's School family.
- Governors hold the school to account for its Catholic Life and recognise their responsibility for its evaluation. For example, the link governor works with the principal to monitor Catholic Life and to set schedules for visits. This collaboration is then reflected in the minutes of governors' meetings, and subsequently in target setting for further development.
- The school is committed to working collaboratively and sharing good practice, as shown by its involvement in the diocesan education service and its links to other schools, within and beyond Our Lady of Lourdes MAC. The head of Religious Education has been encouraged to visit examples of best practice in Birmingham and this has impacted on her work.
- Governors are fully supportive of school leadership and what it seeks to achieve. However, they are also aware of their responsibility to challenge decisions and recommendations.
- All staff respond very well to the leadership and guidance they receive from the leadership team. They have a high regard for the Catholic Life of the school, which they fully support and actively promote.
- Provision for staff induction and in-service training is of a very high order. It is well planned and tailored to individual needs as appropriate.
- Planning for the Catholic Life of the school is based on monitoring evidence. It systematically tackles key areas for development and builds on areas of strength. However, the school recognises that the monitoring, evaluation and recording of outcomes towards further school improvement would benefit from greater regularity and consistency, and the use of more frequent pupil feedback.
- Communication with parents about all aspects of school life is very strong, through newsletters, the school's website, and regular social media communication.
- Parents speak very highly of the school. They feel that communication is good, staff are approachable, and that any concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Requires Improvement
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Requires Improvement
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Requires Improvement

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- Outcomes for most pupils in Religious Education are at least comparable with, and in a good number of cases better than, those in literacy, the result of continuing good progress within and between key stages.
- Outcomes in Religious Education for most pupils are good. There are strategies in place for continuing improvement, for example to ensure the engagement of all boys in their learning.
- When teaching is strong, it is effective in ensuring that pupils make consistent progress within and between key stages, developing secure knowledge, skills and understanding in Religious Education. However, where teaching is less than good, progress is more variable.
- Most pupils, across all key stages, have a good factual knowledge of key beliefs, celebrations of the Faith and the liturgical year.
- There is a balance of teaching about Religion as well as teaching about how we can learn from Religion. As a result, pupils are able to apply their learning in Religious Education to their understanding of the Faith and their daily lives and articulate this in conversation.
- When teaching is good or better, pupils enjoy their learning. During some lessons observed by the inspectors, pupils were engaged with a range of activities that were interesting, relevant to their own lives, and ensured they made progress. However, in a number of lessons, there was a lack of sustained engagement and challenge of pupils.
- Where teaching is at least good, teachers listen to, observe and question pupils during lessons, seeking to maximise learning, offer reinforcement or reshape tasks as appropriate.
- When used, pupils respond well to the effective use of structured questions during lessons. These questions increase pupils' confidence in learning and understanding. However, the use of quality teacher questioning is not consistent across all lessons.
- Pupils are keen to do well, and generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace.
- Baseline information on entry, based on the scheme of work for Year 4, indicates a wide range of starting points for pupils. To help teachers' knowledge of pupils' abilities in Religious Education, contact with feeder schools and pupil tracking have been put in place.
- Teachers and other adults are aware of pupils' abilities and prior learning and understanding. They generally use this knowledge well to plan effectively and support appropriately, addressing the needs of pupils and ensuring at least good progress over time.

- Lessons are generally well planned to reflect a range and sequence of activities and learning opportunities, using a variety of resources, for example scripture, prayer and IT. However, as acknowledged by the school in its development planning, further improvement of teachers' use of differentiation and extended questioning are needed to challenge and extend all pupils.
- Pupils respond well to the demands and varied learning styles asked of them during lessons. They collaborate well in pairs and small groups, whilst developing skills of independent learning as they progress through the school.
- Pupils work well with learning support assistants; whose knowledge about Religious Education and pupils' needs are both good.
- All pupils have an assessment tracking sheet at the front of their exercise books. These sheets provide pupils with information about their progress. However, due to their inconsistent use, they do not help pupils understand how to improve their work.
- In some exercise books, there is too little assessed work of an appropriate quantity and challenge as pupils move through the school. This results in fewer opportunities for pupils to understand their current progress and how to improve.
- Although, there is a detailed marking and presentation policy in Religious Education its use is inconsistent. Practice does not always reflect the expectations of the policy to include review, peer and self-marking, and to follow up pupils' responses to formative marking. This, again, is a barrier to pupils understanding of how to improve their work further.
- St Bede's is a middle school which organises its teaching and learning on a secondary model throughout Years 5-8. This model has been adopted to prepare pupils for transfer into Year 9 and the start of GCSE courses.
- The Religious Education curriculum, and active links with other schools and places of worship, provide opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development through well-planned strategies for incorporating best practice, for example raising pupils' awareness of other faiths.
- Other areas of the curriculum and the Catholic Life of the school clearly link to the Religious Education curriculum.

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

- The Religious Education department has been supported by senior managers and in particular by the head of faculty. A targeted, structured programme of support for the head of department, in collaboration with the diocesan education service, has slowly begun to show benefit. This should be continued with vigour, to further develop the effective leadership of the subject.
- Leaders conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in Religious Education. Their analysis provides a basis for accurate diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses.
- This monitoring of teaching and learning also provides essential indications of areas for professional development of colleagues. As a result, opportunities for generic support and development, as well as targeted guidance and help as appropriate, are put in place inhouse, through outside providers, or in collaboration with colleagues in other schools. However, monitoring and evaluation needs to be more regular in order to effectively improve standards in teaching and learning.
- Although, the school is making significant efforts, with some success, in the professional development of its teachers in Religious Education, there is still a significant difference between the most and least effective teaching. Consequently,

teaching is not consistent throughout the school. Senior leaders are committed to a support programme for improvement, which they monitor.

- In order to support the head of department, to safeguard the progress and outcomes of all pupils, and to address the gaps in achievement for boys and pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), the school has appointed a second in department, arranged for collaborative support from the head of boys' Physical Education, and involved the SEND coordinator with evaluation and training.
- Schemes of work have been completely rewritten by the head of Religious Education, following consultation and support from the diocesan education service to develop best practice. The schemes of work in Religious Education are now fully in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Work is ongoing to create a bank of lesson plans to assist colleagues in their planning.
- Leaders should review the timetabling of future Religious Education lessons. There is currently too little written work in many pupils' exercise books. This was not helped by a period of three weeks when the taught curriculum was suspended. This calls into question if the minimum 10% of curriculum time devoted to the subject has been consistently met.
- Governors have oversight for Religious Education and generally fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

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

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- There is a range of scheduled opportunities for Collective Worship within school and in church. These clearly enrich the life of the school and reinforce the centrality of the Catholic faith. Prayer is incorporated into the daily life of the school and its teaching.
- The prayer life of the school has been a particular focus within the action planning process. It has been supported by staff training and work of the lay chaplain, as its scope and impact widens. It is a feature of Catholic Life, supported by targeted and explicit exploration of how and why to pray during taught curriculum time. Clear guidance for expectations of regular prayer moments during the day have been shared with staff.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in opportunities for worship. They speak positively of its relevance and variety, which they clearly enjoy and gain greatly from.
- Pupils sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm in a variety of settings.
- During the inspection, inspectors joined a scheduled pupil leadership Mass. This was attended by pupils with leadership roles such as the Mini Vinnies and was celebrated by the priest chaplain in church. This was a calm, reverent and fully-participatory

occasion, in which pupils provided the bidding prayers. Other pupils were readers, altar servers or took part in the offertory procession. All took part with enthusiasm in the music and singing.

- A growing number of pupils make powerful contributions to the initiatives being developed by the lay chaplain, for example in the role of prayer leader in every class.
- Pupils respond with enthusiasm and focus to themed assemblies, which they find engaging and relevant to their own lives. They show a positive understanding of the liturgical year, and are keen to participate whenever appropriate, pray with reverence, sing with enthusiasm, and many offer answers and suggestions with confidence.
- Collective Worship observed during the inspection was mostly good. However, prayer observed during form time offered too little time or focus for worship of any real value. This meant that prayer lacked a heartfelt response from some pupils, and the input of pupil prayer leaders was undervalued.
- Examples of daily prayers are prominent around the building, and some examples of pupils' own prayers are displayed in classrooms and corridors.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of traditional prayer and liturgy and a thorough understanding of different styles of private and public prayer.
- The work of the lay chaplain has an increasing impact upon worship and life in the school. Since her appointment in 2016, and building on existing foundations, she works closely with the principal, and with groups of pupils, for example the prayer leaders, to increase opportunities for involvement with and the quality of worship at St Bede's.
- There is time for reflection built into each teaching week. To support colleagues in this, the lay chaplain produces a PowerPoint for each year group. These may centre around a saint of the week, a Catholic celebration, or CAFOD and its work, and will always contain a suitable prayer.
- The prayer life of the school is fully inclusive. Pupils with different religious beliefs are assisted and supported in their prayer, and a range of prayers are displayed around the school. As a result, pupils are at ease and act appropriately when praying with others who have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.
- Pupils are currently invited to evaluate the prayer life and worship of the school in their meetings with the lay chaplain. The school is planning to introduce evaluation folders for each class including a monitoring sheet, which will feed into the school's sequence of monitoring and evaluation and include the link governor.
- Parents and visitors speak positively of the school's provision of worship opportunities. There is an opportunity, for example, to gather informally after Mass and share a cup of tea. There are also evaluation books available for them to record their views or requests. These books are regularly reviewed by the chaplain, lay chaplain and leaders to inform planning for school improvement.

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

- Collective Worship is strongly promoted at all times by the personal example of faith shown by the principal. He is ably supported in his mission by all other leaders, staff and governors, and worship is consequently inclusive, focused and faith-filled.
- Leaders have a clear schedule for monitoring Collective Worship, observing prayer sessions, learning walks and pupil interviews.
- Leaders have a target to consolidate and make Collective Worship monitoring more frequent and formal. This will increase and improve the subsequent evaluation of activities and ongoing impact on future planning and school improvement.

- The priest chaplain and lay chaplain both have defined roles in the promotion of Collective Worship; they plan to contribute increasingly to the proposed development of more formal monitoring and evaluation.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	141064
Local authority	Worcestershire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Middle
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	9-13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	620
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Noel Burke
Headteacher	Lloyd Roberts
Telephone number	01527 525916
Website address	www.st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 th -7 th June 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Bede's is a five-form entry school with 620 children currently on roll. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, an area with mixed housing.
- 60% of pupils are Catholic.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is a little above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry for the majority of children is in line with national expectations.
- Since the last inspection the school has become part of Our Lady of Lourdes Multi Academy Company; there is a new principal, largely changed SLT, and a new head of RE within a faculty structure.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Paul Nutt and Janet Mellor.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with governors, including the Catholic Life link governor, the principal, the Religious Education subject leader and faculty leader, the school chaplain, the lay chaplain, the data manager, faculty leaders, a group of parents.
- The inspectors attended a student leadership mass, a school assembly, two scripture sessions, three class registrations, and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan. They also conducted a work scrutiny.