# DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 100631**

**St Bede's Catholic Infant and Nursery School**

**Clapham Park**

**London**

**SW12 0AB**

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| **Inspection date:** | **24th May 2023** |
| **Chair of Governors:** | **Marcia Marshall & Meabh Quoirin** |
| **Headteacher:** | **Ewa Ostrynska** |
| **Inspectors:** | **Helen Frostick** |
| | **Isabel Quinn** |

**EDUCATION COMMISSION**
St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR
Tel 01689 829331
**Interim Director of Education: Angela Cox OBE**

| Key for inspection grades | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 2 | Good | Grade 4 | Inadequate |

# FULL REPORT

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Bede's Catholic Infant and Nursery School is an inner city, voluntary aided Primary School in the Lambeth Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is a hard federation with the Junior School of St Bernadette. The principal parish the school serves is St Bede's, Clapham Park, with some pupils attending from St Simon and St Jude's, Streatham Hill.

The school admits an increasing number of ethnic minority pupils and mobility is high with many pupils coming from Wandsworth and Merton boroughs to fill the school places. The school has reduced in size due to a falling roll from a two-form entry primary school to a one-form entry primary school. There are currently 105 pupils on roll.

The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 61%. On entry to Reception class, pupils' ability is below the national average with the pupils coming from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. Most pupils, 83%, have English as an additional language with 39% eligible for Pupil Premium funding. The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has been rising over the years at 36% and currently there is one Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) with two pending.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

| St Bede's is an Outstanding Catholic school because: |
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- The pupils are excellent ambassadors of the school's mission, embodying the very essence of what it means to be a member of a Catholic school.
- Pastoral care is exemplary, and all staff work tirelessly to support all members of the school community; parents, pupils, governors and staff alike.
- The Catholic life of the school permeates all aspects of school activity and pupils show their faith by the way they live. They know and understand the school's core values; 'Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Ready'.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and highly effective, leading to meaningful and purposeful improvements across all areas of Catholic life, religious education and collective worship.

**What does the school need to do to improve further**

- To facilitate opportunities for pupils to take more initiative in planning and leading liturgy and collective worship.
- To enable pupils to make more improvements in their work and boost their confidence by helping them to further evaluate how well they are doing.

## Overall Effectiveness

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| How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education. | 1 |

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| **Catholic Life** | 1 |
| 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 |

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| **Religious Education** | 1 |
| 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 |

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| **Collective Worship** | 1 |
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship. | 1 |
| The quality of provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |

## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- Pupils appreciate, value and are proud of the Catholic life and mission of their school. They are excellent faith ambassadors and talk from their heart about how important their school is to them. A pupil said, 'It's a lovely, beautiful, gorgeous and happy school.'
- Pupils at St Bede's enthusiastically embrace the demand that being part of a faithful community entails. They are compassionate and seek justice for others, sharing their faith beyond the school gates. One parent stated, 'They talk about God a lot and tell us that if there's something wrong, 'God will help you!'.
- The pupil chaplains evaluate the Catholic life of the school with the religious education leader regularly and lead the prayers in assembly. An example of their work was leading on the 'Design a Christmas Bauble Competition'.
- The distinctive Catholic ethos, value system, character and vision of the school has a positive impact on the pupils' behaviour, which is exemplary. They can put their faith into action and talk with passion about their many contributions to school life.
- The pupils deepen their understanding through various and plentiful opportunities to think and discuss spiritually, morally and culturally.
- St Bede's pupils enjoy celebrations of the school's Catholic life and relish the opportunities to share in them, for example the Christmas and Easter productions. Parents, governors and the parish priests, are welcomed visitors to school at these times and this helps to further build the strong sense of community centred on a life lived in Christ.
- The school and parish link directly impacts on the rich Catholic life of the school, with Father Marcus's weekly sessions with the pupils helping to grow a close bond. The trust and confidence built from these experiences, helps the pupils to talk about their faith, thus deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils are active participants in federation Masses and enjoy contributing to them through reading, singing and leading the offertory procession.
- Pastoral support for pupils is at the school's heart and interventions, for example Lego therapy and bespoke sessions with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) coordinator, have a direct impact on the emotional wellbeing of the more vulnerable pupils. Also, the care and support for the families suffering bereavement is exceptional.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.**

- The federation vision is central and lived out by pupils and staff alike at St Bede's.
- The school environment is alive with outward signs that this is a Catholic school.

- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic social teaching as can be seen in the Eco committee's display in the hall celebrating God's creation and encouraging care of our common home.
- All staff are actively involved in promoting and upholding the Catholic life of St. Bede's. They are role models as to how to live out the Gospel values.
- St Bede's foundation mission, 'Two schools, one parish, one community' shapes the links with the federated schools and offers many opportunities for communal prayer and celebration. For example, through shared Masses and picnics.
- The parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the Catholic life of the school and relationships are extremely positive as a result.
- Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) is taught through the diocesan approved, 'TenTen' scheme of work, 'Life to the full.' The pupils at St Bede's understand this programme well and parents are fully supportive of this work.
- Pupils and staff are provided with extensive opportunities for moral and spiritual development.
- Clear policies and procedures have been developed to provide the highest levels of pastoral care for all members of the community.
- A sense of a tight community is the very fabric of St Bede's and according to governors, 'evangelising is a core mission'.

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

- The governors, headteacher and assistant headteachers are fully committed to promoting the highest outcomes for its pupils, in terms of living and working in a Catholic school.
- St Bede's has a very distinctive Catholic ethos and character. This is seen as a core leadership responsibility.
- Governors are active participants in school life, for example attending the welcome breakfast for new staff at the beginning of the academic year. They work in partnership with leaders at the school to ensure that rigorous plans are in place and carried out.
- All stakeholders understand the vision for improvement. Effective and robust monitoring strategies are in place to support and develop the school's Catholic life even further.
- St Bede's has a strong culture of collaboration, staff support and collective responsibility and staff wellbeing is prioritised.
- Feedback is welcomed by the senior leadership team and the views of stakeholders are actively sought and acted upon. This further strengthens the sense of partnership and working towards common goals.
- The weekly visits by the parish priests illustrates well the highest priority given to developing the Catholic life of St Bede's.
- Professional development programmes impact on the teachers' understanding of how to live out the Church's mission in education.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- Pupils are actively engaged in their lessons and their understanding of key concepts in religious education is strong.
- At the end of each key stage, pupils' attainment is in line with other core subjects and progress is very good. This is as a direct result of the innovative way lessons are planned for based on assessment and prior learning.
- A wide range of teaching strategies are deployed to allow pupils the opportunity to demonstrate interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment in their studies. Curriculum plans are designed to teach cross curricular skills, thus maximising learning. For example, the creation of a short animation based on a bible story and the use of Information Technology is highly motivational for the pupils.
- The many achievements of the pupils are celebrated and displayed, including in celebration assemblies.
- The learning environment captures key religious moments in the life of the school. For example, the beautiful and engaging shrine to Mary in the school hall for which the pupils have written prayers and created flowers in Mary's honour.
- The level of challenge in lessons is high, and through higher order questioning in religious education, pupils demonstrate their theological, ethical and moral understanding.
- Pupils at St Bede's enjoy investigating their faith and the faith of others. They embrace the many opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding, for example by participating in pilgrimages.

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding.**

- Professional development has impacted positively on the quality of provision in religious education, for example the joint planning of lessons between the religious education leader and teachers is increasing teachers' subject knowledge.
- Religious education lessons are effectively linked to formative and summative assessment and as a result pupils learn extremely well.
- Additional adults are integrated well, and they effectively contribute to the development of the pupils' understanding in lessons. For example, their use of modelling and inciteful questioning leads to high levels of pupil engagement.
- From Reception class upwards, the pupils are immersed in activities to deepen their understanding of other faiths. Educational visits, for example to the Synagogue in Streatham, strengthens this understanding even further.
- The planning for religious education at St Bede's is based on the scheme, 'The Way, The Truth and the life' and is set within the guidelines of the diocese and Bishop's council.

- Resources are thoughtfully built upon to enhance teaching and learning and are updated regularly to reflect the liturgical year.
- Learning in religious education at St Bede's includes how to be a 'digital citizen' and is preparing the pupils well for the next steps on their educational journey and for life in both the real world and the digital world.
- Planning for religious education is designed to make learning meaningful, for example links are made in science and pupils learn that many saints were doctors or astronomers.

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

- Leaders and governors at St Bede's know their school and their pupils extremely well. This helps them to shape the provision for religious education.
- Standards are high because the strategic direction is set by school leaders and governors play an active part, reviewing and consulting on the finely tuned plans for improvement.
- Thorough action plans, constructed by the religious education leader, result in targeted improvements. This is further facilitated by professional development for staff. An example of this is on assessment and how to use the end of topic descriptors to inform judgements in the progress of the pupils.
- The monitoring by the senior leadership team is presented to the governors who then provide a good balance of support and challenge. For example, their input into the RSHE policy and the choice to use the 'TenTen' teaching resources.
- Monitoring is a shared activity by leaders and governors and includes lesson observations and book looks. The religious education link governor is the parish priest who produces termly reports on progress being made against targets.
- School leaders at St Bede's keep the parents fully aware of their ambitious plans for their children. The parents are unswervingly supportive of them. One parent stated, 'They talk a lot about what they learn in RE at home and are often correcting me!'
- Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the bishops' council in every respect. They also ensure that it is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly those with SEND.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- Acts of collective worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for it, reflected in the reverent participation and spiritual quality of communal singing.
- Pupils at St Bede's have an excellent understanding of the church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. This is consolidated by opportunities to independently design the class prayer areas and create religious icons.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide range of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer using scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, prayerful community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The faith chaplains are helping to develop the prayer life of the school, for example by running a 'Hail Mary Prayer Club' in Mary's special month of May.
- Class prayer books are beacons of excellence, and the pupils are rightly proud of them. Class prayer tables help the pupils to focus on a variety of themes to inspire their prayers.
- Worship is at the core of daily life at St Bede's and communal acts of prayer and liturgical celebrations are tailored to meet the needs of the pupils who are encouraged to pray in their mother tongue.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps on their faith journey and take on leadership roles with relish, for example leading performances during Lent.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- Collective worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils, parents and staff. For example, the prayerful start to the day in the school playground, whereby all gather and recite the school creed together, is a spiritual experience shared by all.
- Prayers continue to be woven throughout the day, including class reflections within lessons.
- Class focal areas are prominent in classrooms and are accessed well by all pupils, including those with SEND.
- The staff are passionate and enthusiastic about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences, for example they use the well-kept, peaceful prayer garden to enhance prayerful moments.
- Weekly hymn practice enables worship through traditional and modern hymns. Feedback from visitors attending Mass and witnessing the pupils heartfelt singing comment on the outstanding contributions the pupils' make.
- Pupils from other faith backgrounds are integrated well into school life.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding.**

- The highest priority is placed on the school's self-evaluation of the quality of collective worship. The religious education leader informs the governors about the provision for collective worship termly. In addition, the headteacher keeps governors well informed through her comprehensive reports to governors.
- Governors are invited to witness the provision at first hand as welcomed participants in the monthly Masses, May procession, to celebrate the month of Mary, and other celebrations. They also accompany the pupils on educational visits to other places of worship.
- Many opportunities are arranged by school leaders for the school community to come together with other local Catholic schools and the wider Catholic community to worship and pray together. This is effectively promoting the prayer life of the school. It is also excellent professional development for staff and an opportunity to build networks to share best practice.