



## DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

### Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

**Name of School:** St Bede's Catholic Primary School  
**Local Authority:** Redbridge  
**Inspection Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
**Reporting Inspector:** Mr Stephen Beck

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary & Nursery	<b>School Address:</b>
<b>School Category:</b>	Academy	Canon Avenue
<b>URN:</b>	102845	Chadwell Heath
<b>Local authority:</b>	Redbridge	RM6 5RR
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 – 11	<b>Tel. No.</b> 020 8590 1376
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed	<b>Headteacher:</b> Mr Gary Nott
<b>Number on roll:</b>	466	<b>Chair of Governors:</b> Mr Mark Butcher
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body	
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	February 2015	

## Information about the school

St Bede's Catholic Primary is a voluntary aided two-form entry school with a nursery class in Chadwell Heath in the London Borough of Redbridge and part of the Diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of St Bede's Chadwell Heath with a small number of pupils coming from adjoining parishes of which St Cedds is the next largest group at 5%. There are currently 469 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is oversubscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 82.6%. There is an above-average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, with 34% speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average with a small number of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium.

## Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding      2: Good      3: Requires improvement      4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 1**

The overall effectiveness of St Bede's is outstanding. This was recognised in its previous religious inspection and its Ofsted inspection and it is commendable how all continue the drive to be the very best they can, reflecting that complacency is not an option. The Headteacher is dynamic in both leading and enabling his staff. This is visible through the way he, with the enthusiastic and confident Religious Education Leader have established a clear vision and work together in harmony. Together they have made a conscious decision that Gospel values are the key drivers for school improvement. Consequently, all leaders are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. They show a strong determination to provide a holistic approach to education, underpinned by great care and genuine love for the pupils to ensure "No child gets left behind". They are resolute in their quest to provide an excellent Catholic education and to serve the community. This has built a capacity to secure and sustain ongoing improvement that was also recognised in the school's last inspection and to their credit has been maintained.

St Bede's is a beacon of excellence, a light for all to see. The Catholic nature of the school permeates all aspects of school life, recognises the uniqueness of the individual and encourages pupils to develop their gifts and talents to the full.

Worship in various forms is a vibrant and daily feature of the school. There is a high level of commitment from all staff to the pursuit of excellence. This work is supported by rigorous whole-school planning, evaluation and review. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and as these are adapted and embedded, they will sustain and support ongoing improvement to outcomes for pupils. As a result of outstanding teaching, pupils achieve highly in Religious Education. There is a strong sense of belonging, manifested in the exceptional quality of relationships and communications, which are key strengths of the school. A climate of tolerance and respect, emanating from the Gospel precept of love of one's neighbour, ensures that those from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds live and work in harmony. The school prides itself on its inclusivity. The Headteacher, Staff and Governors are committed to a flourishing Catholic ethos, which nurtures and supports pupils on their faith journey and provides opportunities for them to thrive and develop. The 'Catholic Life of the School', reflected in the Mission Statement, underpins the school which is passionate about developing pupils through the love and teachings of Christ into individuals who can grow spiritually, academically, morally and culturally. The impact of the Gospel values is evident in liturgies, Collective Worship and relationships, which form the basis of the school community. Priorities have been met since the last inspection and there is a continuous drive for improvement for the good of the whole school community. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Guided by staff, pupils are demonstrating an ability to plan and lead prayer and worship confidently and the school is developing their skills in this area well. All pupils act with reverence and respect, have the opportunity to pray reflectively and formally, and speak with knowledge and pride about their faith.

The school has taken as its Mission Statement, '*Shine like a lantern in the presence of the Lord*'. This is encompassed in everything that happens in the school and serves to mark the interactions between all involved in the school. As a parent responded on their questionnaire, '*St Bede's excels in maintaining all aspects of the curriculum and there are no changes to be made, just continuously maintain their high standards*'.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

With no significant areas for development, the school should continue to work on the areas identified in its self-evaluation and action plan with particular reference to:

- Widening opportunities to moderate in school assessments with other Catholic schools.
- Developing the roles of the school's 'Guardian Angels', to include the further development of pupil-led worship across the school and use of the school's 'Gethsemane Room'.

## **CATHOLIC LIFE**

## **Grade 1**

Leadership and management of the 'Catholic Life of the School' are judged to be outstanding. The commitment of the Head and Religious Education Leader to promote the 'Catholic Life of the School' is evident in every aspect of school life. At least ten per cent of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education, thus meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Catholic prayer and worship are outstanding in this school. Pupils get an extensive introduction to the prayer life of the Church and are given excellent opportunities to initiate liturgies and acts of worship. The celebration of the Eucharist is carefully planned. When Mass is celebrated, pupils' spiritual development is carefully fostered. Parents are highly supportive of the Catholic life of the school as evidenced by the high level of questionnaire responses, all of which were positive and in many cases effusive about the range of provision pupils receive at St Bede's. They also expressed appreciation for the numerous invitations they receive to attend school to see their children in action, particularly in assemblies. The school community as a whole is highly appreciative of the work and time provided by the Parish Priest, who is a regular visitor to the school. In addition to actively providing curriculum support, he provides a strong element of chaplaincy to all members of the St Bede's community and this input is both appreciated and valued.

Opportunities for pupils to be of service in school and the wider community are widespread and enjoyed by pupils. Year 6 pupils demonstrate support for other pupils through their roles as prefects and buddies, supporting and encouraging younger ones in their learning. They have a voice and an opportunity to make decisions through the School Council. The role of 'Guardian Angels' from Years 5 and Year 6 enables pupils to be closely involved in planning school Masses and 'Reconciliation Services', as well as being involved in the organising of charity work that takes place during the year. They also support the younger pupils understanding of the Stations of the Cross by leading younger pupils round the school during Lent. The school has developed a 'Gethsemane Room', which has assisted in developing the pupils understanding of the importance of prayer. The room is accordingly well used although there is scope, which the school has identified, to extend the use of this lovely resource. Display work across the school is of a very high order explicitly supporting the Catholic ethos of the school.

Pupils were able to mention the work the school does around the area of Common Good and have an understanding of the theology that underpins this and the call to service. They recognise the importance of contributing, for example, by supporting both local and international charities throughout the year, including CAFOD, Samaritan's Purse and Macmillan Nurses. Each Christmas they do an alternative 'Advent Calendar' bringing food for those in need in the local area. Links have been made with Palmer Catholic Academy, which has included Year 12 students coming into school to speak to Year 4 about Confirmation. This link enhances their learning in 'Come and See' and provides the opportunity to share practice and develop an understanding of the religious teaching within Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. A Gurdwara visit is planned for Summer 2020 to enhance the teaching of Sikhism.

The quality of Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) is high as the school has invested in a programme called 'Jigsaw', which the school has fully embraced, and has themes which develop progressively across the year groups. In the Summer Term, the 'Journey in Love' programme is used across the school to support Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) with parents of Year 5/6 pupils being invited to workshops to find out more about the curriculum materials. The school is preparing to adapt this resource in line with statutory requirements and diocesan guidance. Parents expressed appreciation and confidence in the school's management of this aspect of the curriculum.

Pastoral Care at St Bede's is a strength. An external counsellor is employed to support particular pupils with specific needs. Worry boxes have been introduced throughout the school to allow pupils to share their concerns privately if required. School leaders support any staff who are experiencing personal or professional difficulties. Parents reflected on the 'family' nature of the school, how supportive this is, the school's welcoming ethos and its open-door policy that ensures staff really know and nurture the pupils.

Governors are exceptionally well informed about the life of the school and provide both challenge and support. They are equally ambitious for the school and its future development and are well led by a knowledgeable and dynamic Chair of Governors who knows the school well.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Grade 1

Almost all pupils make good or better progress and achieve outstandingly in Religious Education. At the end of each Key Stage, the vast majority of pupils reach age-related expectations, with a significant number of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment, in line with other core subjects. High standards in Religious Education have been sustained over many years. All groups of pupils, including those with SEND and those for whom Pupil Premium funding is received, make good progress and achieve well, with differentiation ensuring that the needs of all learners are met. Pupils show high standards of religious literacy. Evidence includes pupils' responses in lessons and the work in their books. They are articulate and reflective learners, keen to contribute their ideas. Pupils enjoy Religious Education, are keen to do their best and recognise its importance to their own lives. They know that Religious Education is a special time and appreciate its calm atmosphere and the opportunities provided for prayer and reflection. Evidence includes the school's 'Pupil Voice' and comments from pupils interviewed as part of this inspection. Lessons include a range of teaching styles and strategies to engage learners. Religious Education is enriched by cross-curricular links such as Art, Drama and ICT. Pupils spoke appreciatively of how they enjoyed these links with other areas of the curriculum.

Behaviour for learning was excellent in the lessons observed. Work in pupils' books is of a very high standard and shows an understanding of the themes and topics studied. Presentation is excellent and reflects the pride pupils take in their work. Even the youngest pupils remain focused and on task throughout their lessons. Pupils recognise the importance of their books as being 'books for Jesus'. In Nursery, each of the classes has their class books that display their work from 'Come and See' and other religious topic work, reflecting excellent Early Years coverage. They enjoy tackling challenging activities and are keen to extend their learning. They respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Parents comment favourably on pupils' attitude and achievement, agreeing that pupils enjoy Religious Education and make good progress. One said, *'I am delighted with the school's Religious Education and how my child enjoys learning new things about religion.'*

The learning environment is appropriately established as Religious Education lessons always begin with the lighting of the lantern and prayer and/or hymns. The standards of teaching, learning and assessment in all lessons observed were exceptionally high. Teachers skilfully engaged and inspired pupils, who responded thoughtfully and attentively. Probing questions enabled pupils to explore and deepen their learning. Teachers demonstrated excellent subject knowledge. Assessment is effectively used to inform planning, track pupil progress and target support and challenge. Pupils are confident in expressing and exploring their ideas and demonstrate extensive religious vocabulary. Differentiation is evident in planning, questioning and learning activities. As a result, pupils are appropriately challenged to develop their learning.

Support assistants facilitate pupils' learning using well-planned and sensitive support. Marking of pupils' work is regular and affirmative and indicates productive dialogue between teacher and pupil. Self-assessment is also well established, with pupils contributing to their assessments. Pupil progress reviews ensure that support can be put in place where needed and assessment is effectively used to inform future planning and in the constant drive towards raising standards further.

Moderation in-house validates teachers' judgements and a portfolio of work samples provides a reference point for teachers. Pupils feel confident to complete their 'next step bubbles', with the use of verbal feedback for those who are younger or less able. They recognise that these extend their understanding of 'Come and See' topics. Pupils are skilled at self-evaluating every lesson in Years 1 to 6, according to their age, through a written activity, verbal feedback, questions, or one question, which informs the summative assessment for Religious Education. This assists staff to recognise where they are experiencing difficulty in their understanding. Assessment is carried out at the end of each topic and is judged according to the school's criteria – c b a (c being the lowest) and is based on the interim Religious Education standards from both their written work and formative assessment throughout the topics.

Leaders and Governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. Any additional requirements and policies of the Diocese, regarding the Religious Education curriculum, are embraced and fully implemented. Leaders and Governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge, which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school, which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education. Governors are fully informed about Religious Education standards and the Subject Leader regularly reports to Governors. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all policies linked to Religious Education. The Religious Education Link Governor meets regularly with the Subject Leader and is informed of the impact of standards across the school and any new initiatives. He is guided and informed of monitoring to know how pupils are progressing, providing a strong link with the governing body. The Religious Education Subject Lead is experienced, organised, effective and hard-working. She leads by example and inspires others in offering outstanding practice. She seeks ways to continually improve and is presently looking towards making links with other Catholic schools to develop external moderation. Parents receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education and formal reports on the achievement of their children. There is also a wealth of information on the schools' website.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

## **Grade 1**

St Bede's is a very prayerful and spiritual community where various forms of worship are regular and meaningful parts of the day. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It reflects the Catholic character of the school. Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school and plays a vital part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Music is a strength in worship where pupils sing joyfully with great gusto, often including signing and action. They particularly enjoy times when their parents and other members of the community can attend worship with them. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which permeates the school and is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for others. They can reflect purposefully in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and confidently. Pupils are inspired by, and enthusiastic in their response to Collective Worship, most notably when they are actively involved. It was evident in the assembly attended on the theme of 'Trust in the Lord' where the school's 'Guardian Angels' undertook the readings. The assembly was marked with strong links to scripture and benefited from present-day links with 'International Women's Day' and reflection on the life and work of Harriet Tubman.

By Key Stage 2, pupils are confidently able to prepare and lead acts of class worship and it would be appropriate to widen the opportunities pupils have to do this. From the earliest stages, they recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their faith and the faith of others. Adults provide excellent role models for pupils and contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development and this is evident when pupils lead liturgies.

Pupils understand and use a variety of approaches to prayer, which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of worship, both traditional and contemporary. They have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches these requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities. The experience of living and working in a supportive, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background and they have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths.

Outstanding practice enables opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship. The teachers provide appropriate age-related resources and opportunities to help pupils acquire the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and plan and deliver alongside pupils providing excellent role models in worship. Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles. The Parish Priest visits the school and its worshipping community often, providing support for Collective Worship through, for example, whole school and class liturgies.

Leaders and Governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship. Leaders deliver Collective Worship with passion and commitment. They know how to plan and lead in worship to bring pupils closer to God and give them special moments with God. There is a valid programme to develop staff in their ability to lead in worship. The Religious Education Lead is a source of strength for the school and provides excellent support to less experienced staff. The evidence clearly shows that the provision for Collective Worship is monitored and reviewed to improve its quality. School leaders seek meaningful opportunities to promote and share the spiritual life of the school with parents. Regular newsletters involve parents and to encourage the spiritual experiences of the children. Parents spoke highly of these and they also said they feel included and welcomed. Governors and leaders review and examine the effectiveness of Collective Worship within the school. They rightly value the work of the school and the commitment and impact of the dedicated staff team and the Religious Education Leader. Having availed of in-service, leaders have expert knowledge to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school and are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.